NR 2005:10

Sexual harassment in schools

Prevalence, structure and perceptions

Eva Witkowska

National Institute for Working Life, and

Department of Public Health Sciences,
Karolinska Institutet,
Stockholm, Sweden

ARBETE OCH HÄLSA | VETENSKAPLIG SKRIFTSERIE

ISBN 91-7045-759-X ISSN 0346-7821

Arbetslivsinstitutet
National Institute for Working Life

Arbete och Hälsa

Arbete och Hälsa (Work and Health) is a scientific report series published by the National Institute for Working Life. The series presents research by the Institute's own researchers as well as by others, both within and outside of Sweden. The series publishes scientific original works, dissertations, criteria documents and literature surveys.

Arbete och Hälsa has a broad target-group and welcomes articles in different areas. The language is most often English, but also Swedish manuscripts are welcome.

Summaries in Swedish and English as well as the complete original text are available at www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se/ as from 1997.

ARBETE OCH HÄLSA
Editor-in-chief: Staffan Marklund
Co-editors: Marita Christmansson, Birgitta Meding, Bo Melin and Ewa Wigaeus Tornqvist

National Institute for Working Life
S-113 91 Stockholm
Sweden

ISBN 91–7045–759–X
ISSN 0346–7821
http://www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se/
Printed at Elanders Gotab, Stockholm

"Have you called anyone a *whore* today?"
Farsta High School, 2001

List of publications

This thesis is based on the following papers, which will be referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

I Witkowska, E. & Menckel, E. (2005). Perceptions of sexual harassment in Swedish high schools: experiences and school-environment problems. *European Journal of Public Health*, 15(1); pp. 78-85.

II Witkowska, E. & Gillander Gådin, K. (in press) Have you been sexually harassed in school? What female high school students regard as harassment. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*

III Witkowska, E. & Kjellberg, A. (in press) Structural analysis of peer sexual harassment in Swedish high schools. *Sex Roles*

IV Witkowska, E. & Eliasson, M. High-school boys and sexual harassment: Gender, sexuality and power. Manuscript.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to innumerable people, without whom this project would have never been initiated, continued, or completed. I regret I cannot name them all in this short account. I hope you know who you are - the wonderful people who, in their professional and personal capacity, helped me along in this, not only a scientific, but also a personal-growth adventure. These are all my Swedish, and non-Swedish, friends, neighbors, and all the others who – along the way – helped, listened, supported, and, generally in good spirits, have gone the extra mile when it was needed. I could not have done anything without you. But, in semi-chronological order, there are some I can name. Anders Lundström made sure I was in the right place at the right time to get involved in the project on school violence. Ewa Menckel believed in this project and strongly supported its initiation; she also became my first supervisor. Lucie Laflamme helped in practical matters as well as acting as a mentor and a role model in her love of research and dedication to its highest standards. She also contributed to my joy and well-being through a very special donation of "the girls", two most lovely furry creatures. Katja Gillander Gådin deserves a whole acknowledgements section to herself. She became my supervisor when hardly anybody believed a continuation was possible, and, in unparalleled style, led this project to its conclusion. Most of the credit for this thesis to actually emerge belongs to her. Anders Knutsson came on board at the same time, and kindly and patiently took a chance on this project. The importance of his support is hard to overestimate. And, there is Ewa Wigaeus Tornqvist. She stepped in when help was needed and single handedly put everything in order. She has not only been an exceptionally effective manager, but also a role model of highest standards of professional conduct. Working under her supervision has been a great opportunity and a privilege. I leave a special place to thank Mona Eliasson, who over the years has been a continuous source of support – wise and knowledgeable, and a very special person I have had the luck to meet.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Anders Kjellberg, who shared his precious time and expertise in what has turned out to be one of my more enjoyable learning experiences. I would also like to thank Sven Bremberg, Leif Svanstrom, Gunnar Aronsson, and Ann Hammarström, for their kind help. I would like to thank everybody at the Department of Public Health Sciences in Karolinska Institutet who, in their professional capacity, organize, teach and otherwise support the postgraduate program. In particular, I would like to thank Gunmaria Löfberg, who has been its heart and soul. I also express my gratitude and admiration to the two postgraduate students' ombudswomen, Sanna Johansson and Kerstin Beckenius, for their flawless competence and compassionate attitude.

My heartfelt thanks go to everybody in the Department of Work and Health at the National Institute for Working Life, for their help, friendship, and support during the years, in particular Tomas Lindh, Peter Westerholm, Birgitta Floderus, Monika Mortimer, Rosie Herlin, Lotta Nylén, Kaj Frick, Ewa Larsson and my

other lovely “job kompisar”; also to Kerstin Isaksson, Annika Härenstam, Carina Bildt and IngBeth Larsson for generously making time in their busy schedules to scrutinize my work; and to all at the Institute who keep things working smoothly – Gunnar Åstrand, everybody in the IT group, in particular Thomas Johnsson, Lars-Inge Andersson, and Robert Gloria, for keeping my computers, and their user, happy over the years; further, to the super-nice and super-effective team at the Institute’s library. Finally, but most importantly, I would like to thank my most special colleagues: Eija Viitasara, a dear friend, for sharing her wisdom on all things big and small; Miriam Eliasson; a disciplined feminist thinker with a great sense of humor, and a most delightful friend; Karin Grahn for being who she is, and for her practical and emotional support during the organization of the survey; Malin Bolin, and John Sjöström. One could never imagine better people to work and learn with.

I would like to thank the Swedish Gender Equality Office, in particular Lena Sievers, for their support for the project; the Farsta High School, and the school’s social worker Ulla Kullenberg, for their help; and the Swedish Council for Work Life Research (RALF) for financial support for the survey.

Special acknowledgments are due to Jim Gruber and Susan Fineran, two foremost experts in the area of sexual harassment, for their warm encouragement and support, for their indispensable instructions and corrections, and for generous sharing their bottomless well of knowledge.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Jakob, who brought me to Sweden, and has always believed in me more than I ever did myself.

And all importantly, I would like to thank all the students who took the time to share their experiences and opinions in the survey, I hope this work will contribute to making their schools a better place.

Content

Preface

"Sexual harassment is an issue whose time has come"
(Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993, p. 6)

In December 2004, Grästorp, a small idyllic Swedish town, made news with a report of severe peer sexual harassment. In Grästorp's Central school, some male students had established a set of harassing practices – including group assaults, and hitting and poking with rulers, hockey sticks, or other similar school supplies. In the most extreme cases, victims were stripped of their clothing and raped with the use of the objects, often two rulers, vaginally or anally. The practice was so common, it even had its own name, which related to a popular chocolate bar. The case, horrifying as it was, was not an isolated one. Similar reports have been made, for instance, from male sport teams in other schools in Sweden. All the cases have characteristics in common. Manifestations occur on a continuum; less offensive behaviors, such as chasing and hitting with objects, and offensive sexual language, are present alongside and culminate in violent assaults and rape. School authorities don't respond appropriately – sexual harassment incidents were reported to the school officials in Grästorp in the spring. The school classified them as bullying and an anti-bullying talk was arranged for the offenders; the whole thing was quickly forgotten by school officials, if not by the terrorized students, and the harassment continued. It was the parents of the students who finally reacted, and the cases were reported to the police.

Sexual harassment became the topic of this project in response to the need of better understanding of the problem expressed by student organizations, educators, and community officials. Harassment is an interesting and often unacknowledged form of discrimination and violence that results in difficulties in realizing the full potential of affected individuals and groups. Thus, harassment leads to substantial losses in human potential for the community and the work force. Sexual harassment has been also recognized as a public-health problem detrimental to girls' psychosomatic health.

Sexual harassment, as other human behaviors related to gender and sexuality falls squarely into the hotly contested area of overlapping, evolutionary biological, and social constructionist theories. As a practitioner and researcher, I have found evolutionary biological explanation of complex human social behaviors limiting, and favor the approaches that focus on finding ways to facilitate changes in people and their environment. I believe, and have seen numerous times in my practice as a therapist and researcher of social behaviors, that people, groups, and organizations are capable of change, and are actually changing all the time. Limitations, set patterns of behaviors and beliefs that are taken for granted, are in fact ever-changing processes. For that reason, the conceptual framework for the project was based on a social-constructionist, feminist view on gender and sexuality. I believe that a critical approach – questioning, deconstructing and unbalancing established socio-cultural patterns – is beneficial, not only in scientific pursuits but also in public-health strategies (such as health promotion, and prevention of violence and

discrimination). True to this belief, the project has ultimately raised more questions than it has provided answers.

The overall aim of the project was to empirically explore and analyze the social phenomenon of sexual harassment in schools – its prevalence, its structure and perceptions of it. This thesis also outlines a theoretical framework for the definition and analysis of sexual harassment in schools.

Sexual harassment in school as a public-health and work-environment issue

Sexual harassment in schools is recognized as a public-health problem detrimental to girls' psychosomatic health (Berman et al., 2000; Dahinten, 1999, 2001; Fineran & Bennett, 1998; Gillander Gådin, 2002; Gillander Gådin & Hammarström, in press). Qualitative studies show that – although largely not acknowledged – a hostile environment in school has a significant impact on girls' confidence and level of achievement (Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000; Lahelma, 2002; Larkin, 1994). It is difficult empirically to establish the causal effects of sexual harassment (Duffy et al., 2004; Lee et al., 1996). However, many studies indicate that sexual harassment has negative psychological, and educational, consequences (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 2001; Duffy et al., 2004; Eliasson et al., in press; Gillander Gådin & Hammarström, in press; Juvonen et al., 2000; Lee et al., 1996); and other negative health-related effects have been indicated as well (Dahinten, 2001; Lee et al., 1996; Paludi, 1997). Some of the sexual harassment behaviors are forms of sexual assault and traumas with lifelong consequences (Bagley et al., 1997). The presence of harassment in an organization gives rise to psychological distress also among individuals who have not been directly victimized (Larkin, 1994; Schneider, 1997). A majority of victims attempt to ignore or avoid the offensive behavior, and so they may cut classes, or even quit school (Paludi, 1997; Stein, 1995).

Sexual harassment creates a hostile environment for whole groups of students, thus, impairing their educational achievements. Girls may opt out from sports and male dominated curricula because they experience, or fear, being exposed to harassment. This has an impact on their health and fitness as well as on their future opportunities for employment in more prestigious and better paid job areas such as computer sciences, engineering, management, etc.

Sweden's Work Environment Act stipulates that all Swedish schools are to be considered workplaces for students, just as they are for adult employees. The school is an arena for children's first contact with working life, and a place where they spend a large proportion of their time. Despite recent media interest in sexual harassment in schools, and genuine interest on the part of students and many school staff and officials, research in Sweden and other Scandinavian, or even European, countries remains limited. The most recent studies show that boys may become victims of sexual harassment as well, and experience negative health outcomes as a result (AAUW, 2001). There are practically no European data available in this area.

The epidemiology of sexual harassment in school

Sexual harassment in European schools is not well described. In an EU project "Tackling Violence in Schools" (Smith, 2003), including compilation of studies from 17 member countries, most of the theoretical definitions and frameworks employed were not sensitive to sexual harassment and violence against women in general. Reports from Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain included some representation of sexual harassment or sexual aggression/ abuse. The definitions used and their operationalizations, however, were fragmented, arbitrary, and difficult to interpret. The results varied from 0.8%, in the Italian study, to 42% in Portugal.

In the US sexual harassment in schools is better documented. In 1992, the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women conducted the first national survey of sexual harassment in schools, administered through the teen magazine "Seventeen". In 1993, and again in 2000, Louis Harris and Associates conducted – for the American Association of University Women – a nation-wide survey called "Hostile Hallways", which has become a landmark in research on sexual harassment in schools. The findings of all three surveys were similar:

- experience of sexual harassment was pervasive in secondary schools – a majority of the surveyed students (girls 81%-89%; boys 60%-79%) had experienced some form of sexual harassment during their school lives;
- sexual harassment was considered a serious problem by the students – by 70% in the Seventeen study and 75% in the AAUW poll survey;
- the behaviors occurred in public places, accounting for two-thirds of the situations reported in both the Seventeen and AAUW studies;
- students had difficulty getting help, even though a majority reported trying to talk to someone (as cited in Stein, 1999).

In Sweden, representative quantitative data on sexual harassment of adolescents are very limited. A large study of 3400 grade school students in 2002, by the Swedish National Agency for Education, included a question about exposure to offensive sexual name calling, and over 50% of the students reported exposure; additionally, 7% of the students reported exposure to pressuring for sex, and, 4% to sexual assault. Twenty four students (ca 1%) reported sexual assault from a teacher (Skolverket, Dnr 01-2001:2136). In a study conducted in Stockholm schools, in 1995, called "Stop to Sexual Harassment", 50% of a sample of 714 girls in grades 9 and 11 reported experience of some form of sexual harassment in school (Kullenberg & Ehrenlans, 1996). In academia, several universities conducted their own surveys, and in Chalmers Technical University, in 2003, 50% of students reported gender discrimination, and 30% sexual harassment during their time at the university (Bernelo & Peterson, 2001). In Uppsala University, in 1999, 12% of female students reported experiences of sexual harassment; and comparable results were also obtained from: Stockholm University in 1992, Umeå University in 1993, and the University of Lund in 1994 (from: www.allakvinnorshus. org/tjejjouren/ statistik.htm).

Sexual harassment of students by their teachers and other school staff has been subject to very little research. In the Hostile Hallways survey (AAUW, 2001), 38% of respondents reported having been harassed by school employees. In a study of secondary schools in the Netherlands, 27% of students reported having been sexually harassed by school personnel (Timmerman, 2002). Timmerman (2002) also found that sexual harassment by school personnel is more disturbing and causes more psychosomatic health problems than peer harassment.

There are several problems involved in comparing the available data on the prevalence of sexual harassment in schools, generally caused by:

- lack of a common gender sensitive framework and a well operationalized definition;
- use of retrospective, self-report measures;
- use of different, not always appropriate, time frames (from lifetime to two weeks);
- sample selection bias;
- validity and reliability of the method, and generalizability of the results (Arvey & Cavanaugh, 1995; Vaux, 1993).

Sexual harassment appears to be less prevalent in Scandinavia than in other countries, such as the US, the UK, Australia or Canada, but there is very little to suggest that its victims suffer less trauma. It is possible that the Swedish work environment has developed specific egalitarian characteristics that reduce the occurrence of discriminatory and hostile behaviors. It cannot be ruled out, however, that the picture of sexual harassment at work and school in Sweden is incomplete.

Theory of sexual harassment

Gender, sexuality and power

This thesis is written from a feminist, social constructionist perspective that is very well suited to addressing sexual harassment, as it questions the current concepts of masculinity and femininity, and invites the reader to adopt a broader, politicized view of the *construction of gender and sexuality*. Gender and sexuality are culturally and historically constructed *practices*, different across cultures and changing over time (Foucault, 1992). Because "everyone's sense of gender and sexuality has cultural as well as personal resonance and meaning" (Chodorow, 1999) there is a multitude of ways in which gender and sexuality are, and can be, *performed* (Butler, 1990; Salih & Butler, 2004). Gender is continually produced, and reproduced, in social interactions. It is actively achieved in everyday practices throughout the life-span, and not accomplished merely by socialization into gender roles by social institutions such as the family or school. In this study, no distinctions are made between the concepts of *sex* (as ascribed by biology, anatomy, hormones, and physiology) and *gender* (as constructed through cultural and social means). The term gender is used to refer to both concepts in the introduction, interpretation and discussion of the results. In the data collection and analysis, however, gender was operationalized as a discrete, binary category *boy*/*girl*, and persons were ascribed to each category by choosing for themselves the description *boy* or *girl*. The term *power*, in this study, refers to the underlying dynamics keeping the discrete, binary, hierarchical structures of gender and sexuality persistently (re)producing (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995; Foucault, 1992). Generally, the language of this thesis is mixed, and derives from the fields of psychology, feminist theory, and public-health sciences. This thesis represents an investigation into ways in which sexual harassment emerges as one of the practices of *doing*, *performing*, or *constructing gender and sexuality* in our society (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1991), and underlying power structures supporting perpetuation of sexual harassment in schools.

Gender, sexuality, and power in sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a socially and culturally based construct deeply embedded in dimensions of gender, sexuality and power. Research into sexual harassment in the workplace has ante-ceded research on school sexual harassment and offers some useful theories. Gutek's "sex-role spillover" theory based on "the carryover into the workplace of gender based expectations for behavior that are irrelevant or inappropriate to work" (as cited in Tangri & Hayes, 1997, p. 116) can be related to situations when girls are seen as natural followers or carers, and expected to help the teachers to keep peace in class, help the boys with study and supplies (Duncan, 1999; Öhrn, 1998), or when the peer group expects girls to wear to school skimpy, revealing clothing and a heavy makeup. Another classic theory is "contrapower sexual harassment" model of "sexual harassment to reinforce

gender status by negating organizational status of women targets" (Rospenda et al., 1998, p.51). The contrapower model explains a situation when a girl, class president or best student, or even a female teacher, is subjected to demeaning and offensive behavior by her less prominent male peers. Both examples of sexual harassment, however, have in common the general platform of challenging and excluding women and girls from some spheres of public activities and undermining their expertise in those spheres (Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000). A framework of continuum of violence against women (Kelly, 1988) regards rape and sexual abuse as extreme manifestations of the continuum of "normal" male-female relations in our society, rather than an unrelated "pathology". Extending this theory, it appears correct to see sexual harassment at school as an extension of the acceptable gender relations. This model finds support in many studies (Bergman, 1997; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000; Robinson, 2005; White, 2000). Some forms of harassing behaviors are not easily sorted out from what is considered a "normal" gender training. The perpetrating boys are often not aware of the impact their behavior has on their peers. The objectification of others for the empowerment quest seems to be a part of gender training for boys. Girls' gender training includes honing their sexual attractiveness but also maturity defined as ability to nurture, support and be unselfish. And so, girls will underreport the experience of harassment and boys will be allowed to seek their empowerment at the expense of the empowerment of their female (and other, weaker, or more "feminine" male) peers (Larkin, 1994; Stein, 1995).

However, sexually harassing behaviors are not simply produced from a lack of knowledge, simple sexist attitudes, or misplaced sexual desire – they play a role in the (re)production of gender (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Quinn, 2002; Rospenda et al., 1998). Sexual harassment is a way "to express and reconfirm the public and private positions of hegemonic masculinity within a heterosexualized gender order" (Robinson, 2005, p. 20). "Girl watching", attractiveness rating, bragging about sex, and so on, function as male bonding episodes, with the objectification of women for that purpose, and become vehicles for the (re)production of masculinity. They may be seen more as "acts of ignoring than states of ignorance (of the effects of the behavior or the law)" (Quinn, 2002, p. 386). It is not an automatic process, however. The game has its rules and has to be played by the rules (Quinn, 2002). In reality, men and boys seem to be harassed more often by other men or boys then by women or girls (Berdahl et al., 1996; Waldo et al., 1998). "Boys are not harassed because they are boys, but because they are the 'wrong' sort of boys" (Lahelma, 2002, p. 302). This kind of sex-based harassment builds hierarchical differences between boys, between masculinities, in which aggressive heterosexual masculinity is superior (Lahelma, 2002; Robinson, 2005). It becomes an expression of the privilege men collectively have over women (Connell, 1995).

All those aspects of sexual harassment seem to create multiple problem areas on all levels, the recognition, conceptualization, and attempts at intervention and prevention (Stockdale & Hope, 1997). The issues of power and sexuality are often not fully mastered by adults, teachers, parents or society at large, and so we fail to educate the children in the exploration of both. There are issues of shame and guilt

attached to both, and double standards abound. Despite work by feminists to reclaim the power of female sexuality, the power of sexuality remains asymmetrical in the public domain, and being seen as sexual has different consequences for women and men (Quinn, 2002). Also in schools, sexual harassment, regardless of gender of victim and perpetrator, derives from this gender asymmetry (Lahelma, 2002). It is important to keep in mind informal power structures in schools (Lahelma, 2002; Öhrn, 1998), and how they influence views and behaviors; they support status-quos that are not necessarily clearly visible or represented in a formal/official school structure. There seems to be a strong tendency to regard sexual harassment as a misplaced sexual desire, especially among adolescents, where it is seen as a normal stage in proper mating-behavior training, and/or strong sexual attraction not yet accompanied by fully developed, socially appropriate tools for pursuit. This understanding is often shared by adolescents and teachers (Lahelma, 2002; Robinson, 2005). Research in schools and adult workplaces does not support this idea. Sexual harassment is better explained as a way of maintaining and policing gender boundaries, as well as informal and formal power structures (Eliasson et al., in press; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000; Lahelma, 2002; Larkin, 1994; McMaster et al., 2002; Öhrn, 1998; Robinson, 2005; White, 2000). Teachers do not know how to respond, and informal gender power imbalance and sexual asymmetry make female teachers (a majority in schools) vulnerable to ridicule and harassment from students (Harne, 2000; Lahelma et al., 2000; Walkerdine, 1990).

Sexual harassment perceived as misdirected sexual attention does not explain its power component and the ways in which it is used to humiliate and control. Not seeing the sexual component, however, will make it impossible to understand the intimate aspect and the special vulnerability it creates.

> "Sexual harassment is a powerful technology of gender that plays on the relationship between love and power, identity and social convention, self-representation and self-sacrifice" (Ring, 1994, p. 164).

It is very interesting to see that two radically different approaches to adolescent sex and sexuality education – North American and Scandinavian – have resulted in similar patterns of sexual harassment in schools, and in similar difficulties dealing with it. In Sweden, the mainstream official discourse of positive sex and gender equality in all aspects of public, private and sexual life makes the debate on sexual harassment somewhat fragmented. In sexuality education, a positive approach to teenage sex is programmatic, and the power component difficult to see. Ethical guidelines for research on youth sexuality stipulate that approaches to teenage sex as "bad behavior, or addressing abstinence at length cannot be used in Scandinavia" (Edgarth, 2001, p. 20). Yet, in sexual-behavior research, early introduction and multiple partners are considered risk behaviors, especially for girls, and are correlated with other risk behaviors such as unwanted pregnancy, but also smoking and drinking (Edgarth, 2001; Tyden, 1996). There is also a social inequality component, as evidenced by distinct differences between students of "academic" and "vocational" high school programs in early sexual debut, number of

partners, sex on first date, and sex under the influence of alcohol or drugs, all of which are considered risk behaviors (Ambjörnsson, 2004; Tyden, 1996). This suggests that there are gender and class differences in self-protective behaviors, and in concern over safety and health. Women are more concerned than men about sexual risks, and women and girls are more fearful of threatened sexual violence (Gordon & Riger, 1989). Sexual force is directed mainly against girls and women, and 10.6% of the 14-20 year-old girls surveyed in 1999 reported having been victims (Forsberg, 2000). In a recent poll of 3,000 boys and girls aged 15-16, undertaken by the Swedish Department of Social Services in their "FLICKA" ("Girl") project, 77% of girls reported having experienced fear when out alone in the evening, while only 28% of boys ever felt that way (from: www.tjejzonen.com/cms/visning/index.php?ID=226). The official discourse of equality makes issues related to sexualized violence invisible, and puts pressure on individuals to act as if the equality was achieved (Hägg, 2003). This approach frames acts of victimization and discrimination as individual failures, and not as systemic injustice.

Gender differences in sexual harassment

Until recently, literature on men and sexual harassment has been scarce, and – in most cases – treated men almost exclusively as actual or potential perpetrators. Historically, anti-sexual-harassment movements, both academic and grass-root, have been concerned with the protection of working women, and the profile of accumulated knowledge reflects the urgency of this role. The point has been reached, however, when – in order to understand the full picture of gender-power dynamics in the public sphere – gathering and analysis of knowledge regarding male experiences of sexual harassment have become a necessary part of the research landscape. Thus far, most of the prevalence research has employed methodologies and tools derived from research on women workers' exposure to sexual harassment. Data obtained from these types of surveys may be inadequate in mapping out and understanding experiences of men. There is evidence that similar behavioral experiences are likely to have different meanings for men and women, and will not be found equally upsetting to both genders. Men do not seem to feel threatened by behaviors that for women constitute harassment; in particular, men do not seem to experience loss of control in response to them (Berdahl et al., 1996; Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989). Similar trends have been presented for adolescent students (AAUW, 2001; Eliasson et al., in press; Fineran & Bennett, 1998, 1999; McMaster et al., 2002 ; Murnen & Smolak, 2000), despite the fact that exposure to relevant behaviors show fewer gender differences in schools than in other age groups, or in higher education and in working life (Hand & Sanchez, 2000). In studies of adolescent students, boys were more likely to be less upset by the majority of relevant experiences – except for homophobic incidents and pressure for relationships – and more likely to interpret situations as "horseplay" (AAUW, 2001; Roscoe et al., 1994; White, 2000). Hence, men and women – and boys and girls – are harassed in different manners, and the factor

structures obtained from women's data so far have not proven stable when applied to men (Baldwin & Daugherty, 2001; Stockdale & Hope, 1997; Witkowska & Kjellberg, in press). In recognition of this fact, Waldo (1998) revised Fitzgerald's Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ) to include additional groups of questions (lewd comments, negative remarks about men, enforcement of the male gender role) in his Sexual Harassment of Men Scale (SHOM) (Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989; Waldo et al., 1998).

Also, whether actors are of the same or different gender seems to be of importance for the interpretation of the incidents (McMaster et al., 2002; Roscoe et al., 1994). Men and boys are more inclined to interpret inter-gender acts as jokes or play then women are. Even so, play is not innocent in terms of the (re)production of gender. It provides a structure for gendered social action (Thorne, 1993). Gender differences in socialization and in social, organizational and physical power have a role to play in sexual harassment. Men tend to interpret behaviors as sexually harassing when their "masculinity" or dominance in the public sphere is challenged, whereas women react to the behaviors that reinforce female subordination (Berdahl et al., 1996). Results from quantitative school sexual harassment studies, based on more or less elaborate check lists, tend to report the results from boys as equivalent to those of girls and interpret them as representing identical experiences. The question of whether quantitative data obtained from men and women in sexual harassment check-list surveys can be interpreted as equivalent has been raised by many researchers. It seems reasonable to extend this question to include the younger population (Hand & Sanchez, 2000).

Structural dimensions of sexual harassment

The first classification of sexually harassing behaviors was introduced by Till (as cited in Fitzgerald et al., 1997), who classified the experiences of a large sample of college women into the following five categories, organized by their level of severity: *gender harassment, seductive behavior, sexual bribery, threat,* and *sexual imposition*. *Gender harassment* comprises generalized sexist remarks and behaviors, not necessarily designed to elicit sexual cooperation, but rather to convey insulting, degrading, or sexist attitudes about women. *Seductive behavior* comprises inappropriate and offensive advances that are not based on abuse of power in the organization. *Sexual bribery*, by contrast, involves the solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-related behavior by promise or reward. *Threat* involves the coercion of sexual activity by means of punishment. Finally, *sexual imposition* entails assault.

Gruber's typology of sexual harassment was based on a review of existing research results and the American Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) definition and categories (as cited in Gruber, 1992). Gruber (1998) used this information to construct what he called an Inventory of Sexual Harassment (ISH), which includes three main categories and several subcategories. The categories, which focus on both personal and environmental sexual harassment, are *verbal requests, verbal comments,* and *nonverbal displays*. *Verbal requests* are

attempts to initiate and secure sexual cooperation. Verbal-request subcategories encompass sexual bribery, sexual advances, relational advances, and subtle pressure/advances. *Verbal comments* encompass personal remarks (directed at a particular person), subjective objectification (rumors and/or comments made about a person), and sexual categorical remarks about the genders "in general." *Nonverbal displays* comprise sexual assault, sexual touching (brief sexual or contextually sexualized), sexual posturing (gestures, violations of personal space, or attempts at personal contact), displaying sexual/pornographic materials (such as sexually demeaning objects), and profanation of someone's sexuality. In all categories, subcategories are listed in order from more to less severe.

In a number of studies, the structure of sexual harassment has been studied by means of factor analysis (Baldwin & Daugherty, 2001; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Stockdale & Hope, 1997). Fitzgerald's repeated applications of her Sexual Experience Questionnaire yielded results that did not support Till's division (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Analysis of the data eventually supported only three factors: *gender harassment, sexual coercion* (a combination of sexual bribery and threat in Till's system), and *unwanted sexual attention* (seductive behavior and sexual imposition according to Till). Fitzgerald et al. (1995) proposed that sexual harassment is a behavioral construct composed of these three related, but conceptually distinct and non-overlapping, dimensions. She also identified severity as another axis of her model. A confirmatory factor analysis of three samples (US students, Brazilian, students and US university employees) showed that the three factor structure was invariant across the three samples (Gelfand et al., 1995). In other studies (Baldwin & Daugherty, 2001; Stockdale & Hope, 1997), however, her model was found at best weakly stable across male and female sub-samples and the discriminant validity between the factors was weak. This illustrates the difficulties involved in establishing clear cross-gender and cross-setting factors from different data sets collected using different questionnaires and statistical methods (exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis).

Dimensions of peer sexual harassment in school

Lacasse (2003), in her study of students in grades 8 and 11, performed an exploratory factor analysis of data from administration of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire – High School version (SEQ–HS), which was directly adapted from Fitzgerald's questionnaire, and identified two factors – *moderate* and *severe* sexual harassment – both of which differed from Fitzgerald's original model (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Lacasse et al., 2003). McMaster (2002), in a confirmatory factor analysis of her data from grades 6 to 8, found support for a nested model with a general sexual harassment factor and two specific factors: *same-sex* and *other-sex* harassment (McMaster et al., 2002). In both studies, the structures differed from those identified in adult workplaces. However, Dahinten (2001, 2003), in an exploratory factor analysis of her data from students in grades 9 to 11, obtained two factors: *gender harassment* and *sexual advances/imposition,* which are close to Fitzgerald's original dimensions of *gender harassment* and *unwanted sexual attention*, although Dahinten's questionnaire was not based on

the SEQ, but on White's (1997) revision of the American Association of University Women' Hostile Hallways scale (AAUW, 1993). Another classification common in school sexual harassment studies (Larkin, 1994; Timmerman, 2002) is a simple three-factor classification with qualitative origins introduced by Larkin (1994). It is based on practical, easily observable characteristics of behaviors, not on statistical analysis: 1) *Verbal harassment* – calling offensive names, "put-downs," sexist comments and jokes, sexual propositioning, rating of physical attractiveness, and threats; 2) *Physical harassment* – grabbing, touching, rubbing, and sexual assault; 3) *Other types of harassment* – leering, sexual gesturing, etc.

It is not clear from the above efforts what the measurable, stable dimensions of school sexual harassment are, or to what extent the factors identified in research on adult workplaces are applicable (Dahinten, 2003; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; Lacasse et al., 2003; McMaster et al., 2002). The most prominent and validated sexual harassment classifications and instruments, such as those of Fitzgerald and Gruber, are based on data from samples of adult women (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Gruber, 1992). The factors involved need to be reviewed for application to men, and also to schools. Most workplace classifications seem to define categories according to their positioning in relation to the issues of sexual cooperation and disciplinary, work-related sanctions for refusal. This type of classification is difficult to sustain when applied to peer sexual harassment in schools, which are often perpetrated without clear sexual intent in mind (Duncan, 1999; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000).

Defining sexual harassment

The term sexual harassment emerged in the 1970's in the US, presumably established by the Working Women United Institute in 1976 (Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). Still, even now, for researchers as well as educational and health practitioners sexual harassment is proving to be a "messy" concept (Stockdale & Vaux, 1993). Defining sexual harassment across settings, genders and age groups is a difficult task.

Lay definitions of sexual harassment

Organizational and cultural differences seem to produce different contexts and understandings for different groups of people (Gruber et al., 1995; Lee, 2001; Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Making a formal complaint requires, among other things, that people recognize and acknowledge that they have been sexually harassed, and only a small proportion of students and adult workers, reporting exposure to relevant situations, will indicate that they have been sexually harassed (Berman et al., 2000; Corbett et al., 1993; Dahinten, 2001; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Houston & Hwang, 1996; Magley et al., 1999; Samuels, 2003).

> "Relevant experiences may not be recognized as sexual harassment for at least two reasons: (a) the psychological costs to identifying oneself as a 'victim' of sexual harassment, and (b) ambiguity in the 'lay person's' definition of sexual

harassment and variance of the definition across subgroups" (Stockdale & Vaux, 1993, p. 222).

Similar behavioral experiences are likely to have different meanings for men and women, and will not be found equally upsetting by both genders (Berdahl et al., 1996; Duffy et al., 2004; Fineran, 2002; Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989). Younger subjects are less likely to label their experiences as sexual harassment (Dahinten, 1999; Duncan, 1999; Fineran & Bennett, 1998, 1999; Grover & Nangle, 2003; Larkin, 1994; Loredo et al., 1995; Paludi, 1997; Stockdale & Vaux, 1993). The fact that there seems to be reluctance in women to label their experiences as sexual harassment, however, does not mean that they welcome or accept the actual behaviors (Lee, 2001).

Studies of self-definition of sexual harassment can be divided into two general groups according to their focus: (a) focused on objective characteristics of the incident, and (b) focused on individual differences (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Among the characteristics of an incident, severity of the episode is believed to be the best predictor of whether a woman will label her experience as sexual harassment. Severity can be measured as the type of harassment (with gender harassment considered the least severe, unwanted sexual attention moderately severe, and sexual coercion the most severe) (Gruber, 1992). Increased frequency and duration have also been found to predict the labeling of an experience as sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Although the most severe behaviors are most likely to be labeled as sexual harassment, they usually are experienced alongside other, less severe, types of behaviors; and often, different types of behaviors do not form exclusive categories. Contextual factors, such as the status of the harasser, attractiveness, race and sexual orientation of the harasser, have also been found significant. Among the individual factors, gender, race, age and socioeconomic background, but also previous victimization and personal resources, had been studied and found relevant for what is perceived as sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997).

In the qualitative research focused on lay definitions of sexual harassment, both adult women and girl respondents have shown very narrow or ambiguous definitions of sexual harassment, mostly closest to physical molesting and coercion from a person in power, involving humiliation or bad feelings (Frazier et al., 1995; Larkin, 1994; Lee, 2001; Loredo et al., 1995). The narrowness of the definition often seems to conflict with the belief that it is also wrong to be exposed to a behavior that is depersonalizing, demeaning or threatening, and involves conflicting feelings (AAUW, 2001; Larkin, 1994; Lee, 2001; Loredo et al., 1995). This condition would mean the inclusion of other, less direct and more ambivalent behaviors, such as comments, jokes and gestures. In the AAUW (2001) study, when asked in an open-ended question, students described sexual harassment as: unspecified comments or gestures (30%); unwanted touching, grabbing, or contact (23%); unspecified touching grabbing, or contact (20%); and, making someone very uncomfortable (17%). In another question, they identified, from a list of behaviors, the following as the most upsetting: forcing to do something sexual

other than kissing, pulling off clothing, sexual rumors, and spying in the dressing room.

Gender harassment in many studies is identified as the least severe (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Loredo et al., 1995; Magley et al., 1999), and physical harassment, assault and sexual coercion as the most severe (AAUW, 2001; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Gruber, 1990; Terrance et al., 2004). In particular, gender harassment and seductive behavior are less likely to be labeled as sexual harassment by young people than sexual coercion and sexual assault (Corbett et al., 1993; Frazier et al., 1995; Houston & Hwang, 1996). However, Dahinten (2001) and Larkin (1994) found that gender harassment was the most upsetting to their adolescents respondents, while sexual advances were far less upsetting. Loredo (1995) and Lee (2001), in turn, found sexual advances and sexual coercion high on the severity list for their adult study participants. Possibly, the problem stems from the fact that respondents will not necessarily identify as harassment what they find upsetting, and that different studies use differing procedures – some asking about actual, and others about hypothetical behaviors (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 1999, 2001; Larkin, 1994; Lee, 2001). In experimental situations, actual and imagined behavioral and emotional responses to actual and to suggested sexual harassment situations have been found not to be the same (Fitzgerald, 1993; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). The ambiguity of the "lay person's" definition of sexual harassment (Dahinten, 1999; Paludi, 1997; Stockdale & Vaux, 1993) is often compounded, for students, by frequent non-sexual use of sexual harassment (Duncan, 1999; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000; Land, 2003); and, schools and teachers are often just as confused (Harne, 2000; Larkin, 1994; Stein, 1999; Terrance et al., 2004). The behaviors become normalized in schools, which makes it difficult to identify them as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is then denied and re-labeled as "everyday rudeness", or at best as bullying, rather than personal or social injustice (Dahinten, 1999; Lee, 2001; Stein, 1999). It is important to remember that labeling one's own experiences as sexual harassment is not decisive for suffering harmful psychological and health and work-related outcomes. Women who do not label their experience as sexual harassment still experience negative symptoms. In some instances, women who have experienced sexual harassment, but did not label it as such, report lower job satisfaction than women who did label their experiences as sexual harassment (Magley et al., 1999).

Organizational definitions of sexual harassment

Most of the current organizational definitions available from the research into sexual harassment in workplaces are based on the US legal definition of sexual harassment as either "quid pro quo" harassment (sexual coercion by a person in power, e.g. teacher-to-student harassment), or "hostile environment" harassment (behavior that is sexual or related to sex, which creates a working climate that impedes the academic performance of a student (e.g. peer harassment) (Stein, 1999). The definition of sexual harassment adopted by the European Commission in 1991 refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work. This includes unwelcome

physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct. The definition specifies three alternative conditions for a behavior to be unacceptable:

1. that it is unwanted, improper, or offensive;
2. that its refusal or acceptance may influence decisions concerning a job;
3. that it creates a working climate that is intimidating, hostile or humiliating for the person in question (as cited in Aeberhard-Hogdges, 1996).

The Swedish legal definition of sexual harassment is as follows: sexual harassment is "every form of undesired conduct based on gender or undesired sexual behavior that affects the employee's integrity at his or her workplace" (Hägg, 2003).

Defining sexual harassment in schools presents its specific problems (Paludi, 1997). Most workplace definitions include sexual coercion, demands for sexual cooperation and disciplinary, work-related sanctions for refusal. This type of harassment is difficult to conceptualize when applied to peer sexual harassment in schools, which is often perpetrated without clear sexual intent in mind (Duncan, 1999; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000). It may not be very useful either to describe teacher-to-student type of harassment that is rarely explicit and always carries a threat to the student due to the unique level and character of power imbalance and student dependency in school. Some instances of peer harassment may carry a possibility of an implied coercion component based on popularity, or social status within the peer group. Peer coercion could apply to a situation when a student is threatened with physical harm or having their reputation damaged, or is promised something desirable, such as popularity or becoming boyfriend/girlfriend, in return for compliance with inappropriate advances. This type of coercion is not well explored and its quantitative measurements not developed.

Most definitions of sexual harassment in schools use the criterion unwanted, or unwelcome, as the major identifier, to stress that sexual harassment is the behavior that *was* unwanted, regardless of what it *appeared* to be to the offender. AAUW's (American Association of University Women) definition for their "Hostile Hallways" study in 2001 was as follows:

> "Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with your [the student's] life. Sexual harassment is not behavior you like or want (for example wanted kissing, touching, or flirting)"(AAUW, 2001, p. 2).

The problem with the above definition is that because schools are primarily educational institutions, it is necessary to evaluate standards of school behavior related to sexual harassment in a broader learning context than is the case for working adults. Many types of offensive behaviors may be considered undesirable in schools as they interfere with students (the victims' but also the witnesses') right to a supportive, respectful and safe learning environment. The "uninvited" or "unwelcome" categorization is not relevant in that context and may actually diminish seriousness of many types of situations by forcing the victims to "prove" they did not want or welcome them. Furthermore, concern has to be given to the diffe-

rence between *welcome* and *expected*. Many undesirable behaviors are common, and normalized, in schools and if recognition and labeling of experiences as harassing arises primarily from the violation of predominant norms of sexual interaction, it may be difficult for the students alone to ever make this distinction (Giuffre & Williams, 1994). A technical problem arising from the "unwelcome" criterion is that experience of institutionalized forms of harassment, where workers consent to sexual behaviors as part of their job – and many forms of sexual harassment are normalized in school environment as "part of the job" – are not likely to be captured by survey items that specify respondents should report "unwanted" sexual behaviors (Welsh & Nierobisz, 1997).

Most of the behaviors that occur in schools peer-to-peer are: use of offensive language (whore, slut, fag), sexual comments and innuendoes in public, and touching private body parts, which are all inappropriate in schools (AAUW, 2001). In terms of the school staff-to-student harassment we believe it is the adults' responsibility to ensure students' well being. Possible consent or lack of thereof should not be relevant in cases of behaviors violating professional rules of conduct. Girls already feel responsible for creating boundaries for boys' behavior, and it becomes a heavy load for them (Lahelma, 2002). Indeed, setting boundaries for victimizers should not rest with the victims. The schools need to take responsibility and clearly become the ones setting boundaries of conduct. Generally, it is the schools that are responsible for students working environment and the effects undesirable behaviors have on students. School also prepare students for their future working life, as workers, and as managers. Acceptability of a behavior in school environment should be judged by the level of its noxiousness to individuals or groups, irrelevant of the fact of it being "invited" or "welcomed", and at which point. This should also help in dealing with claims that the victim "invited" harassing behavior, or was sending "mixed messages", or in cases when harassed student is too scared, shamed, or insecure to clearly stand up for herself/himself. Many instances of sexual harassment, such as using offensive language, are obvious and teachers, or other adults present, can react immediately. In more complicated cases, judging the inappropriateness of the conduct, and its undesirability in school, should be based on several factors, including school's rules of conduct, victim and witness statements, sexual harassment policies and information, and, if necessary, a consultant's opinion.

Sexual harassment can also be defined conceptually, as disrespectful, reducing, refocusing on non-work related issues, such as looks or sexual practices. This type of definition, approaching sexual harassment from a different perspective, was used by Robinson (2005, p. 21):

> "Sexual harassment ... is defined ... as any physical, visual or sexual act experienced by a person from another person at the time or later, which asserts a person's sexual identity over their identity as a person, which makes them feel any of the following: embarrassed, frightened, hurt, uncomfortable, degraded, humiliated or compromised, which has the further result of diminishing a person's power and confidence."

Main aim and objectives

The overall aim of this project was to empirically explore and critically analyze the concept of sexual harassment in high-school, its prevalence, perception and structure.

The specific study questions were:

- What are girl students' experiences and perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment in high-school during one school year? (Paper I)
- What are boy students' experiences and perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment in high-school during one school year? (Paper IV)
- What is the interpretation of gender differences in experience and perception of sexual harassment in the contexts of gender, sexuality and power? (Paper IV)
- What do female high school students regard as sexual harassment? (Paper II)
- What is the structure of peer sexual harassment in Swedish high schools? (Paper III)
- What are the implications of the obtained results for future research and prevention? (Papers I, II, III, IV)

Methods

Definition

For this study, sexual harassment was defined as inappropriate and unacceptable conduct of a sexual nature, or based on gender, that interferes with a student's right to a supportive, respectful and safe learning environment in school. This included different types of conduct, with verbal and non-verbal manifestations. The definition included all types of harassment, inappropriate sexual attention and gender harassment, as well as the conditions outlined by the European Commission, capturing a broad spectrum of behaviors so as better to describe the nature of the phenomenon. The definition was not based on "unwelcome" or "unwanted" criterion but on "inappropriate" and "unacceptable". The behavior can be deemed unacceptable by the recipient, or by the school. The conceptual definition by Robinson (2005), was added for the theoretical analysis of school sexual harassment, and in the discussion of the results.

Study group and data collection

A random sample of 2,200 youth, 1,162 boys and 1,038 girls born in 1983, from all types of municipalities in Sweden, was chosen from a national population register by a computer program. The study group largely comprised 17- and 18-year old students in the second year of Swedish high school. Subjects received the questionnaire a month before the end of the school year during late April to mid May 2001. Questionnaires were mailed to the home addresses of the young people in the sample along with a stamped return envelope and a cover letter including: (1) description of the goal of the study (part of a project to improve school environment); (2) instructions for filling out the questionnaire; (3) assurance of protection of anonymity of the respondents and confidentiality of their answers, and, that the participation in the survey was voluntary; (4) the name of the organization and of a contact person.

In total, 1,080 respondents (488 boys, 589 girls) eventually returned the questionnaire, after one reminder, and then a second reminder with a new copy of the questionnaire. Youth not attending high school were excluded from the survey. They were asked to mark an applicable box and return the questionnaire unanswered. The non-response among the high school dropouts was much higher than among the students, and only few (compared to the expected proportion of 12% in the population in the age group, according to yearly calculations by Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) returned the questionnaires (Table 1). Questionnaires from youth not enrolled in regular, day high-school, questionnaires returned blank, or less than half-filled, were excluded from the analysis. Nine hundred and eighty questionnaires from students were eventually accepted for analysis, 440 from boys and 540 from girls. The final response rate, after adjustment by the proportion of school drop-outs in the general population in the relevant age group was 51% overall, 59% for girls and 43% for boys.

Table 1. Sample and response rates

	Boys	Girls	Total
Original sample (n=)	1,162	1,038	2,200
Not in school*	12%(139)	12%(125)	12%(264)
In school**	1,023	913	1,936
Returned questionnaires	488	589	1,077
Usable questionnaires	440	540	980
Final response rate for students (calculated against the "not in school" data)	43%	59%	51%

*from Skolverket's yearly statistics
**calculated against the "not in school" data

To identify possible sample bias, the survey respondent group was compared with the population on key demographic variables: geographical distribution, gender ratio, school size, and attended programs. The respondents were from all over Sweden and lived in different types of municipalities: in larger cities (37%), sub-urban areas (16%), middle-sized cities (15%), and less populated areas such as small towns and rural areas (32%). This distribution seemed to be a satisfactory representation of the actual population distribution in Sweden, according to the Statistics Sweden (Table 2), except for the slight under-representation of girls from large cities. The gender ratio was skewed and girls were slightly over-represented in our sample (Table 2).

Table 2. Geographical distribution of the population and respondents by gender (in percents)

Types of municipalities	Boys population	Boys respondents	Girls population	Girls respondents
Large cities	40	40	41	35
Suburban areas	15	15	15	17
Middle-sized cities	15	14	15	15
Less populated areas such as small towns and rural areas	30	31	29	33
Total	51	45	49	55

Sixty percent of the female respondents attended theoretical, and 40% practical/ vocational high school programs. The actual proportions, according to the Statistics Sweden, indicates that girls from theoretical programs were over-represented in our sample. For the boys the representation was more accurate (Table 3).

Table 3. Attended program distribution of the population and respondents by gender (in percents)

Program type	Girls population	Girls respondents	Boys population	Boys respondents
Theoretical	47	60	38	48
Practical	53	40	62	52

Thirty-one percent of the respondents attended large schools (over 1,200 students), 56% middle-sized schools (400 to 1,200 students), and 13% small schools (less than 400 students), which is a fair representation of the distribution of high schools by size in Sweden according to the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket).

We can infer that the respondent group was no different in the main characteristics than the represented population. The percentages generally corresponded with the composition of school enrollments, except for the gender ratio and attended programs (in the case of girls).

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to capture the personal experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment in school, and relevant school environment and individual characteristics. The questionnaire consisted of 29 items directly related to personal experience of sexual harassment, and 55 related to the school environment. All questions, except for four open items, were multiple choice. The exposure questions were based on two time frames -- the last school year, and the student's entire period of schooling. The questions were based on existing sexual harassment measures, such as the Hostile Hallways questionnaire "School Life", Fineran's questionnaire "Peer Sexual Harassment Survey", and also on youth risk behavior surveys, such as the "School Crime Supplement" to the US National Crime Victimization Survey, and the Center for Disease Control's "Youth Risk Behavior Survey". Copies of these questionnaires were obtained from their authors. The Hostile Hallways check list is the best established and most widely used tool for schools. Its items were translated to Swedish and then back-translated to English several times during the process of developing this questionnaire.

Attempts were made to establish basic validity and reliability of the questionnaire, mostly of the part consisting of questions measuring exposure to the behaviors related directly to sexual harassment (see Appendix). The list of questions directly related to sexual harassment was organized according to Gruber's typology of sexual harassment to ensure satisfactory content validity (Gruber, 1992). The items were all derived from the widely used AAUW Hostile Hallways check list, and evaluated by six independent experts in the area of sexual harassment and also survey research. This study is a collaboration between Swedish speaking and English speaking researchers. The items were eventually discussed in four focus groups with 16 Swedish high school students, then reformulated accordingly. The meaning of each question in the complete questionnaire was then carefully analyzed, question by question, during individual sessions with seven adolescents through a process of concurrent and retrospective probing (Nolin & Chandler, 1996). This process includes reading each question and commenting, "thinking aloud", on what it means and how an answer is chosen. Internal reliability of the 15 exposure items for which also frequency of exposure was obtained (verbal behaviors, and non-verbal displays, in Table 4), tested with Cronbach's alpha, was 0.86.

Measurement of the variables

The questionnaire consisted of items directly related to personal experience and perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment (peer verbal behaviors, peer non-verbal displays, peer sexual assault, and teacher-to-student sexual harassment), and questions related to school environment (background variables).

Background variables

The question "Have you been sexually harassed in school?" (yes/no) was used to identify respondents who acknowledged the experience of sexual harassment. Perceptions of different school environment conditions (including sexual harassment) as problems were estimated from a list of eight different alternatives. The question was formulated as follows: "What kinds of problems do you think are present in your school?" Each answer was presented as a multiple choice on a scale from 1 (not a problem) to 4 (big problem). Other background variables measured concerned: knowledge about sexual harassment ("knows very well what sexual harassment is", "knows to some extent", "doesn't know at all"); the source of any such knowledge ("school", "media", "friends"); sexual harassment policy in school ("yes", "no", "don't know"); school size ("0 –550", "551-1,200", "1,201-1,500", "1,501 or more students"); type of municipality ("large cities and suburban areas", "middle-sized towns", "lesser populated areas, such as small towns and rural areas", "industrial areas and other"); and, type of educational program attended ("theoretical", "practical").

Verbal behaviors and non-verbal displays

Verbal behaviors were covered by nine survey questions and non-verbal displays by seven (see Appendix). Short term exposure was measured on the basis of the survey question: "How often has it happened to you during this school year that a student, or students. . . ?" Responses were multiple choice on a 5-point scale: 1 (every day), 2 (every week), 3 (every month), 4 (occasionally), 5 (never). For the analyses, choices 2 – 4 were coded "problem", and choices 3 and 4 were considered statements of serious concern and also coded "serious problem". Lifetime exposure was measured by corresponding sub-questions: "Has it ever happened to you in school that…?" Possible responses were "Yes" and "No". Perceptions of the verbal behaviors and non-verbal displays as problems in school were based on the question: "How much of a concern, in your opinion, is the following behavior in your school?". Response alternatives were multiple choice on a scale from 1 (not a problem) to 4 (big problem). For the analyses, choices 2 – 4 were coded "problem". Choices 3 and 4 were considered statements of serious concern and also coded "serious problem".

Sexual assault and teacher-to-student behaviors

Behaviors related to sexual assault were measured by four survey questions, and the behaviors related to teacher-to-student sexual harassment by three questions addressing verbal, non-verbal, and sexual coercion types of behavior (see Appen-

dix). Short term exposure was measured on the basis of the question: “Has it happened to you during this school year that a student, or students (teacher or other member of school staff - in the case of teacher-to-student harassment)…?” Possible responses were “Yes” and “No”. Lifetime exposure was measured by corresponding sub-questions: “Has it ever happened to you in school that…?” Possible responses were “Yes” and “No”. Perceptions of behaviors as actual/ potential problems in school were measured on the basis of responses to the question: “In your opinion, how likely are these situations to arise in your school?”. Responses were multiple choice on a scale from 1 (not likely at all) to 4 (very likely). For the analyses, choices 2 – 4 were coded **“**potential problem”. Choices 3 and 4 were considered statements of high concern and also coded “threat”.

Data analysis

Girls’ and boys’ experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment in high school, and gender differences

Differences in the perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment between the exposed (during the last school year) and unexposed girls and boys were tested for statistical significance using Pearson’s Chi-square test. The same strategy was used for testing the significance of differences in exposure and perception between boys and girls for each of the behaviors.

What female high school students consider harassment

Three specific problems were addressed. Question “Have you been sexually harassed in school?” (yes/no) was used to identify respondents who acknowledged the experience of sexual harassment, and two groups of respondents were identified, a “yes” group, and a “no” group, based on the response to the question. Overall prevalence was assessed for acknowledgment of sexual harassment in general (SH) as a personal experience, and as a problem in one’s own school (SH problem/SH no problem); for students’ own exposures (lifetime) to specific behaviors; for the perception of specific behaviors as a problem or potential problem in one’s own school and for different background factors. The differences in background variables between the “yes” and “no” groups were tested by Pearson chi-square. The associations between exposure to specific behaviors and acknowledgment of harassment (yes/no) were also tested by Pearson chi-square, and presented as the prevalence of exposure to a specific behavior in the group of students who acknowledged harassment (the “yes” group), and as the prevalence of acknowledging harassment in the group of students exposed to each specific behavior. We used the same methodology to estimate associations between perceptions of specific behaviors as a problem and acknowledgment of the problem of sexual harassment in general (SH) in one’s own school (SH problem/SH no problem).

Structural analysis of peer sexual harassment in schools

Fifteen questions for which frequency of exposure was obtained (Table 4), represented Gruber's three categories of harassment: *verbal requests* (3 questions), *verbal comments* (7 questions), and *nonverbal displays* (5 questions) (Gruber, 1992). To test the models, the variables were assigned to the categories of Fitzgerald's and Larkin's models respectively (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Larkin, 1994) (Table 4). Eight items were assigned to Fitzgerald's category *unwanted sexual attention (USA)*, and seven to *gender harassment (GH)*. Larkin's categories *verbal* harassment, *physical* harassment, and *other* types of harassment were assigned eight, two, and five questions respectively. The tenability of the three models (Gruber's, Fitzgerald's, and Larkin's) and two new proposed structures were tested with confirmatory factor analyses using LISREL version 8.3 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). For comparison, a one-factor model was also tested. Separate analyses were made of the boys' and girls' data, as initial analyses clearly indicated differences between their factor structures. The fit of the models was assessed by chi-square, normed chi-square (chi-square/df), the root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the comparative fit index (CFI) (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1995; Kline, 1998; Shumacker & Lomax, 1996). Normed chi-square was calculated because the chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size; even with a large sample, trivial differences may result in the rejection of the specified model (Hu & Bentler, 1995). Values below 1.0 indicate an "overfitted" model, and values larger than 2.0, or the more liberal limit of 5.0, indicate that the model does not fit observed data and requires improvement (Shumacker & Lomax, 1996). The root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) is a measure of discrepancy per degree of freedom for any particular model (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Values of about 0.05 or less indicate a close fit of the model to data, and values between 0.05 and 0.08 indicate reasonable approximation. The third index used was the comparative fit index (CFI) (Kline, 1998). It is an incremental index; values greater than 0.90 indicate acceptable fit-to-data.

Table 4. Survey questions representing the three structures tested in the confirmatory factor analyses

Items	Gruber's typology	Fitzgerald's	Larkin's
Verbal Requests			
1. Pressuring for sex Made suggestions, propositions or demands to you for sexual favors or sexual relationship		USA*	Verbal
2. Pressuring for relationship Bothered you by asking for dates, leaving messages or soliciting information from others, and not taking "no" for an answer		USA*	Other
3. Sexualized conversations Bragged about their sexual prowess, repetitively, or talking about sex all the time in your presence		GH**	Verbal
Verbal Comments			
4. Name calling – slut, whore Called you slut, whore, bitch, cunt, or similar words		GH**	Verbal
5. Name calling – lesbian, fag Called you dyke, lesbian, fag, or similar words (also included in the "Hostile hallways" survey)		GH**	Verbal
6. Personal sexual comments/jokes Made sexual comments or jokes about your looks, body or private life (also included in "Hostile hallways")		USA*	Verbal
7. Sexual rumors Spread sexual rumors about you (also included in "Hostile hallways")		GH**	Verbal
8. Sexual messages/graffiti Wrote sexual messages/graffiti about you on bathroom walls, in locker rooms, etc. (also included in "Hostile hallways")		GH**	Other
9. Rating attractiveness Publicly "rated" your attractiveness		GH**	Verbal
10. Demeaning comments/jokes about gender/sexuality Made demeaning comments or jokes about your sexuality e.g. "all girls are whores" or "I hate fags"		GH**	Verbal
Nonverbal Displays			
11. Brushing up or rubbing against Brushed up or rubbed against you in a sexual way also "by accident" (also included in "Hostile hallways")		USA*	Physical
12. Pulling clothing Pulled at your clothing in a sexual way (also included in "Hostile hallways")		USA*	Physical
13. Sexual looks Looked you up and down in a sexual way		USA*	Other
14. Sexualized contact seeking Made sexual gestures, comments or jokes to you (also included in "Hostile hallways")		USA*	Other
15. Showing pornography Showed, gave, or left you sexually offensive pictures, photos or messages (also included in "Hostile hallways")		USA*	Other

*USA – Unwanted Sexual Attention
**GH – Gender Harassment

Ethical considerations

Anonymity and confidentiality are the utmost concerns in large studies collecting sensitive information, as well as protecting the respondents, as much as possible, from being negatively affected by their participation in the study. The design of the present study ensured anonymity of the respondents and confidentiality of their individual answers. Participation in the study was voluntary and in no way affected the participant's standing in school. This was explained to the participants in the cover letter, and in the questionnaire. The topic for the survey was delicate, and high-school student group was chosen to participate, to minimize the possibility of reaching somebody who will not have skills or resources to deal with the topic. To assist the respondents who might have experienced negative emotional states during or after the completion of the questionnaire a list of emergency contact numbers for services dealing with issues raised in the questionnaire was attached. Also, similar previous studies (such as the "Sixteen" survey (Stein, 1999) and "Slagen Dam" in Sweden (www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se/informationsmaterial/Captured%20queen.pdf/Captured%20Queen%20.pdf) have shown that the respondents largely found the opportunity to acknowledge their experiences, to describe them and to voice their opinion, to be a positive opportunity. The written information to the participants, the data collection, and protection, was in accordance with the National Institute for Working Life and the Swedish Board of Work Life Research guidelines for work environment survey research, and ethical evaluation of the studies was obtained from the Regional Ethical Committee in Stockholm, decision no. 04-540/5.

Results

Girls' experiences and perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment in Swedish high schools during one school year

Verbal behaviors

Potentially offensive verbal behaviors experienced by the respondents could be divided into two categories in accordance with their reported frequency (Table 5). The most common behaviors, reported by over 50% (56%-77%) of the girls, were demeaning comments about gender and sexuality, sexualized conversations, attractiveness rating, and sexual comments. Many of the exposed respondents (between 23% and 44%) were exposed to the above behaviors repeatedly (daily, weekly, or monthly). Less common behaviors were those with an explicit sexual reference, i.e. name calling, pressuring for sexual favors and sexual rumors, which were reported by less than 40% (17%-37%). Of the exposed girl students, 9%-16% reported repeated exposure. Respondents who reported exposure to a particular verbal behavior were significantly more likely to identify the behavior as a problem in their school ($p< 0.001$). However, over 50% of non-exposed respondents (respondents not exposed to the behavior during the last school year) rated the behaviors, with the exception of sexualized conversations (37%) and pressuring for sexual favors (24%), as problems in their school, and many of those students (between 20% and 46%) rated the problems as serious. The mean difference in rating between the two groups of girl students was 26% for the verbal behaviors. Lack of recent personal experience did not mean that such behaviors were dismissed as unimportant.

Non-verbal displays

Non-verbal displays were less common, as indicated by reported frequencies of exposure (range: 8%-61%; 8%-28% of those exposed repeatedly), which were lower than for verbal behaviors (Table 5). Again, girl respondents who reported exposure to a particular behavior were significantly more likely to identify the behavior as a problem in their school. But many non-exposed respondents also rated these behaviors as problems (14%-53%; 19%-34% of those as serious). The mean difference between the two groups in terms of frequency of rating behaviors as problems was 28%. Every non-verbal item was rated significantly higher among exposed students than among the non-exposed.

Table 5. Prevalence (%) of exposure to various behaviors and perceptions of them as problems/threats among female students in one school year (*N*=540)

Types of behaviors	All students exposed (exposed repeatedly*)	Perceived as problem by exposed (serious problem/threat**)	Perceived as problem by non-exposed (serious problem/threat**)	χ^2 (df=1) $p< 0.001$
Verbal behaviors				
Demeaning comments about gender	77 (32)	79 (46)	51 (33)	38.88
Sexualized conversations	77 (44)	68 (49)	37 (25)	39.37
Attractiveness rating	71 (28)	82 (56)	57 (25)	37.00
Sexual personal comments	65 (23)	84 (55)	61 (39)	35.73
Demeaning comments about sexuality	56 (23)	73 (53)	51 (31)	26.57
Name calling – slut, whore, bitch, etc.	37 (16)	84 (60)	59 (40)	35.16
Pressuring for sexual favors	26 (14)	53 (35)	24 (21)	39.86
Sexual rumors	25 (9)	91 (69)	60 (35)	44.35
Name calling – dyke, lesbian, fag, etc.	17 (13)	80 (57)	57 (46)	16.53
Non-verbal displays				
Sexualized contact seeking	61 (28)	68 (44)	44 (29)	29.81
Sexual looks	52 (24)	58 (49)	30 (22)	43.08
Brushing up or rubbing against	41 (17)	51 (42)	20 (19)	55.83
Pulling clothing	32 (8)	42 (34)	14 (34)	51.17
Pressuring for relationship	26 (11)	50 (36)	26 (24)	27.21
Showing pornography	12 (8)	58 (26)	26 (25)	25.85
Sexual messages/graffiti	8 (0)	83 (70)	53 (38)	13.60
Sexual-assault behaviors				
Grabbing or pinching	27	83 (47)	51 (33)	45.47
Touching private body parts	13	74 (45)	45 (25)	21.15
Cornering or holding and pulling clothing	2	*n*=9 (*n*=4)	16 (23)	
Forcing to have sex	0.2	0	15 (14)	
Teacher-to-student sexually harassing behaviors				
Demeaning comments about gender or sexuality	14	90 (48)	30 (27)	86.55
Inappropriate touching	12	73 (57)	32 (17)	46.98
Suggestions, propositions or demands for sexual favors	2	*n*=5 (*n*=3)	14 (20)	

*Repeatedly=monthly, weekly, daily (proportion of all exposed students).

**Serious problem/threat=rather big and big problem/rather likely and very likely (proportion of all students reporting 'problem').

Sexually assaultive behaviors

For sexual assault, the frequency of reported exposure was significantly lower (0.2%-27%) than for the two preceding categories (Table 5). Perceptions of the behaviors as potential problems by exposed girls were high (74%-83%; 45%-47% of those considered a threat). For the non-exposed group the proportions ranged between 15% and 51%; and 14% to 33% of those were considered a threat in their school. The girls exposed to a particular behavior were also significantly more likely to perceive that behavior as an actual/potential problem in their school. Estimates for "cornering or holding and pulling clothing" (*n*=11) and "forcing to have sex" (*n*=1) could not be made due to the low number of exposed respondents. The mean difference between the exposed and non-exposed groups in frequency of rating the remaining two most common behaviors in this category as actual/potential problems in their school was 31%.

Teacher-to-student sexual harassment

With regard to teacher-to-student sexual harassment, the reported frequency of exposure ranged between 2% and 14% (Table 5). Reported perceptions of the behaviors as potential problems in their school by exposed girls were high (42%-90%; and over a half considered them a threat), between two and three times as high as for the non-exposed group (14%-32%, 17%-27% a threat). Girls exposed to a particular behavior were again significantly more likely to perceive that behavior as an actual/potential problem in their school. An estimate for demands for sexual favors could not be made due to the small number of exposed respondents (*n*=12). The mean difference between the exposed and non-exposed groups in frequency of rating the remaining two behaviors in this category as actual/potential problems in their schools was 51%.

Overall, 49% of the girls responding to the survey believed that sexual harassment was a problem present in their school. Fifteen per cent believed sexual harassment was a serious problem. Thirteen percent (*n*=71) of the female respondents reported that they had been sexually harassed in school. All girl respondents said they knew what sexual harassment was, and media was the most common source of the information (see Table 8).

Boys' experiences and perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment in Swedish high schools during one school year

Verbal behaviors

In terms of the actual potentially offensive behaviors, the most common belonged in the category verbal behaviors (Table 6), which had been experienced by over half the boys during the last school year. Most common were homophobic name calling (e.g. fag), sexual personal comments, attractiveness ratings, demeaning comments about gender ("all boys are immature"), and sexualized conversations. More than one third of the exposed respondents experienced the above behaviors repeatedly (daily, weekly, or monthly). Respondents who reported exposure to a

specific verbal behavior were significantly more likely than their non-exposed peers to identify the behavior as a problem in their school. Attractiveness ratings were not perceived differently by exposed and non-exposed. Many non-exposed respondents (from one to two thirds of the group) rated the majority of the behaviors as problems in their school (except for pressuring for sexual favors), and many of those students (between 32% and 50%) rated the problems as serious. Sexual rumors, demeaning comments about gender, and pressuring for sexual favors seemed to be found more of a problem by exposed than by non-exposed individuals. Sexual rumors, sexual personal comments, demeaning comments about sexuality and gender, and sexual name calling were considered the most problematic by exposed boys. Attractiveness ratings, homophobic and sexual name calling, and demeaning comments about sexuality were seen as the most problematic by the non-exposed respondents.

Non-verbal displays

Non-verbal displays were less common, reported by up to one half of the group, but the range was wide, as indicated by frequencies of exposure (Table 6). Again, respondents who reported exposure to a particular behavior were significantly more likely to identify the behavior as a problem in their school. This difference in perception was most pronounced for showing pornography, brushing up or rubbing against, and pressuring for relationship. The difference was insignificant for sexual looks, and, for sexualized contact seeking the difference was relatively small. Yet again, many non-exposed respondents also rated the behaviors as problems, and up to 40% of those as serious. Sexual messages/graffiti, and sexualized contact seeking seemed the most problematic for all of the respondents, both exposed and non-exposed.

Sexually assaultive behaviors

The frequency of reported exposure to behaviors regarded as sexual assault (Table 6) was, again, lower (up to one third), than for the two preceding categories. The respondents exposed to a particular behavior were also significantly more likely to perceive that behavior as an actual/potential problem in their school. Most of the exposed respondents rated the behaviors as potential problems in their schools, and more than half, as threats. For the non-exposed group, the ratings were lower but ranged from about one in ten up to half of the group and roughly one third considered them a threat. Statistical testing for "cornering or holding and pulling clothing" (n=10) and "forcing to have sex" (n=5) could not be made due to the insufficient number of exposed respondents.

Table 6. Prevalence (%) of exposure to various behaviors and perceptions of them as problems/threats among boy students in one school year (*N*=440)

	All boys exposed (exposed repeatedly*)	Perceived as problem by exposed (serious problem/threat**)	Perceived as problem by non-exposed (serious problem/threat**)	χ^2 (df=1) p< 0.05
Verbal behaviors				
Sexualized conversations	71(47)	56(49)	30(50)	23.52***
Demeaning comments about gender	66(26)	69(44)	39(42)	33.62***
Attractiveness rating	62(29)	68(47)	65(47)	-
Sexual personal comments	58(30)	69(49)	47(38)	22.05***
Name calling – dyke, lesbian, fag, etc.	53(32)	64(42)	50(32)	7.81
Demeaning comments about sexuality	39(25)	69(43)	54(33)	9.92
Name calling – slut, whore, bitch, etc.	36(49)	68(51)	52(35)	11.13***
Sexual rumors	24(17)	80(57)	46(34)	37.61***
Pressuring for sexual favors	24(18)	44(44)	19(44)	27.10***
Non-verbal displays				
Sexualized contact seeking	55(38)	57(34)	46(33)	5.32
Brushing up or rubbing against	52(28)	42(35)	22(30)	19.81***
Sexual looks	34(22)	44(45)	36(24)	-
Pressuring for relationship	24(16)	49(26)	28(35)	15.79***
Pulling clothing	20(17)	35(38)	18(41)	11.37***
Showing pornography	16(20)	47(45)	20(41)	22.35***
Sexual messages/graffiti	7(14)	79(70)	44(35)	12.65***
Sexual-assault behavior				
Grabbing or pinching	34	70(54)	48(28)	18.49***
Touching private body parts	21	70(44)	40(31)	26.48***
Cornering or holding and pulling clothing	2(*n*=10)	*n*=7	15(26)	
Forcing to have sex	1(*n*=5)	*n*=3	9(36)	
Teacher-to-student				
Demeaning comments about gender or sexuality	7	61(42)	22(25)	24.53***
Inappropriate touching	9	65(65)	25(18)	27.78***
Suggestions, propositions or demands for sexual favors	2(*n*=11)	*n*=7	14(38)	

*Repeatedly=monthly, weekly, daily (proportion of all exposed students).

**Serious problem/threat=rather big and big problem (proportion of all students reporting 'problem'/potential problem).

***p< 0.001

Teacher-to-student sexual harassment

Teacher-to-student sexual harassment, had relatively low (under 10%) reported frequency of exposure, as shown in Table 6. Respondents exposed to a particular behavior were again significantly more likely to perceive it as an actual/potential problem in their school. The proportion of exposed students perceiving the behavior they had been exposed to as a potential problem in their school was well over a half, and they also considered the behavior a more serious problem than the non-exposed boys did. Statistical testing for demands for sexual favors could not be made due to the insufficient number of exposed respondents (n=11).

Overall, sexual harassment in general was considered a problem in one's school by 39% of the male respondents (a serious problem by 9%). Three percents (n=14) of the boys believed they had been sexually harassed in school. Ninety eight percent of the boys reported that they knew what sexual harassment was, and, 71% reported they knew very well. Media was chosen as the source of the information by 86%. As a comparison, school was named as a resource by only 44%.

Gender differences in sexual harassment in schools

Girls dominated experiences of most forms of measured behaviors – with the exception of homophobic name calling and showing pornography, and rougher physical behaviors such as pulling clothing, brushing up or rubbing against, touching private body parts, and grabbing or pinching – which were more commonly reported by boys (Table 7). The gender difference in reported exposure was particularly large for homophobic name calling, followed by sexual looks, and demeaning comments about sexuality.

In terms of perceptions (Table 7), girls were much more likely to see verbal behaviors as problems than boys were, but the differences disappeared in other types of behaviors. The gender differences in perceptions of the behaviors as problems in one's school were the largest for personal sexual comments, demeaning comments about gender, and sexual rumors.

Table 7. Comparison of prevalence (%) of exposure to various behaviors and perceptions of them as problems/threats among boys and girls in one school year (*Nboys*=440, N*girls*=540)

	All boys exposed	All girls exposed	χ^2 (df=1)	Problem boys	Problem girls	χ^2 (df=1)
Verbal behaviors						
Sexualized conversations	71	77	4.3*	50	62	13.00***
Demeaning comments about gender	66	77	7.3**	60	72	19.28***
Attractiveness rating	62	71	9.7***	68	75	6.66**
Sexual personal comments	58	65	5.9**	60	76	30.93***
Name calling – dyke, lesbian, fag, etc.	53	17	139.7***	57	62	-
Demeaning comments about sexuality	39	56	27.3***	60	63	-
Name calling – slut, whore, bitch, etc.	36	37	-	58	68	10.82***
Sexual rumors	24	25	-	54	67	17.12***
Pressuring for sexual favors	24	26	-	27	32	-
Non-verbal displays						
Sexualized contact seeking	54	60	3.2*	53	58	-
Brushing up or rubbing against	50	41	8.5**	34	33	-
Sexual looks	33	51	32.6***	40	45	-
Pressuring for relationship	24	26	-	35	33	-
Pulling clothing	20	31	15.2***	24	23	-
Showing pornography	16	11	4.4*	26	30	-
Sexual messages/graffiti	7	8	-	46	55	7.31**
Sexual-assault behavior						
Grabbing or pinching	34	27	5.4*	57	59	
Touching private body parts	21	13	10.0***	47	48	-
Cornering or holding and pulling clothing	2(*n*=10)	2 (n=11)		18	18	-
Forcing to have sex	1(*n*=5)	0.2 (n=1)		12	15	-
Teacher-to-student						
Inappropriate touching	9	12	5.4**	31	38	4.97*
Demeaning comments about gender or sexuality	7	14	6.5**	26	37	14.67***
Suggestions, propositions or demands for sexual favors	2(*n*=11)	2(n=12)	-	17	15	-

*p< .05
**p< .01
***p< 0.001

What female high school students regard as sexual harassment

Background variables

Thirteen percent (n=71) of the female respondents reported that they had been sexually harassed in school (the "yes" group) (Table 8). All girl respondents said they knew what sexual harassment was, but the "yes" group was more likely to report they knew "a lot". The proportion of girls identifying the media as a source of information about sexual harassment was significantly lower in the "yes" group, also, the proportion of girls identifying friends was significantly higher in that group. Forty-nine percent of all girls thought that sexual harassment in general was a problem in their school, and there was a significant difference between the groups; the belief that sexual harassment was a problem was more common in the "yes" group. Four percents (19 respondents) reported they knew that their school had a sexual-harassment policy (12% did not have any; 84% did not know), and there was no significant difference between the "yes" and "no" groups. In terms of environmental factors, there was no difference with regard to attended school size between the "yes" group and the "no" group, except for students in very big schools (evaluated size of over 1,500 students), who had significantly higher representation in the "yes" group. No difference was detected with regard to type of educational program and type of municipality between the "yes" and "no" groups.

Table 8. Differences between the groups of girls students who did (*yes* group; N_{yes}=71), and did not (*no* group; N_{no}=465), indicate that they had been sexually harassed in selected background variables.

Background variables	Total (N=540) (%)	In the *yes* group (N=71) (%)	In the *no* group (N=465) (%)	χ^2 (df=1)
Knowledge about sexual harassment:				6.65*
knows a lot	73	86	71	
knows somewhat	27	14	29	
Source of knowledge:				
media	87	73	90	14.94***
friends	29	39	27	4.38*
school	37	42	36	-
Sexual harassment in general a problem in school	49	69	46	12.78***
Educational program				-
theoretical	60	55	61	
practical	40	45	39	
School size:				
Small	16	13	17	-
medium	33	16	16	-
Large	16	20	16	-
very large	16	25	15	5.01*
Type of municipality				-
Large cities+suburbs	29	27	30	
medium towns	37	46	36	
industrial+other	25	20	25	
Rural+sparsely populated	9	6	9	

* $p < 0.05$
*** $p < 0.001$

Exposure to behaviors related to sexual harassment during the entire school life
The proportion of girl students ever exposed to a particular behavior in school was significantly higher in the "yes" group for all behaviors (Table 9), but the prevalence of exposed was high even among girls who had reported not having been harassed. In every category, the prevalence of acknowledging harassment was lower for the most common behaviors and higher for the less common ones. Acknowledgment of sexual harassment was highest for the most severe behaviors, such as cornering or holding and pulling clothing, pressuring for sex from a teacher and touching private body parts. Almost 50% of subjects ever exposed to cornering or holding and pulling clothing and pressuring for sex from a teacher acknowledged harassment, whereas only about 16% of those ever exposed to sexualized conversations, attractiveness rating, or sexual personal comments did so. However, a majority of girls ever exposed to severe, physical behaviors were also exposed to the most prevalent verbal behaviors. Eighty percent of the girl students ever exposed to cornering or holding and pulling clothing were also exposed to sexualized name-calling, 93% to sexual personal comments, 86% to demeaning comments about gender/sexuality, 95% to sexualized conversations and 89% to attractiveness rating. Eighty-two percent of girls ever exposed to touching of private body parts were also exposed to sexualized name-calling, 94%

to sexual personal comments, 77% to demeaning comments about gender/sexuality, 92% to sexualized conversations, and 90% to attractiveness rating. Seventy-nine percent of girl students ever exposed to grabbing or pinching were also exposed to sexualized name-calling, 92% to sexual personal comments, 76% to demeaning comments about gender/sexuality, 91% to sexualized conversations, and 90% to attractiveness rating.

A majority of the students identifying themselves as sexually harassed in school were exposed to multiple types of potentially offensive sex-related behaviors during their school lives, with a minimum of eight and a maximum of 22 out of 22 behaviors. Many members of the "no" group, however, were also exposed to multiple types of such behaviors (0–19) and only 3% were completely unexposed (Figure 1).

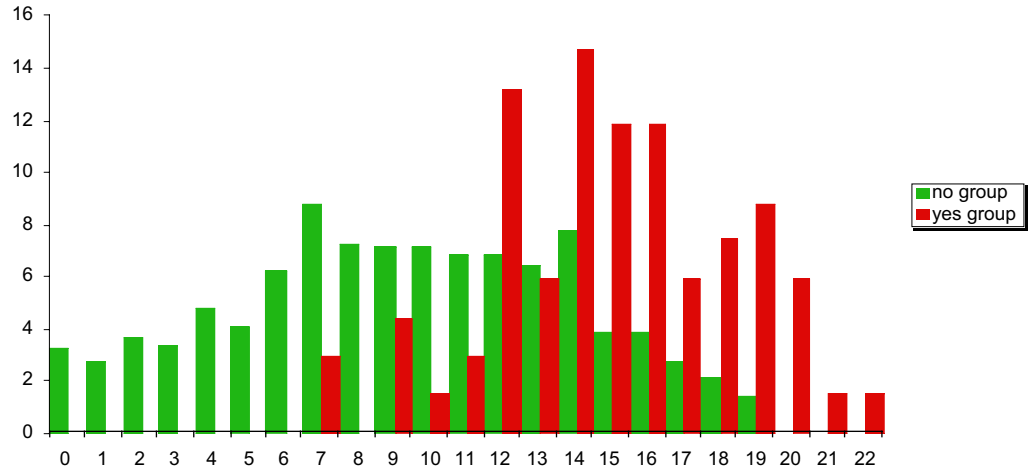

Figure 1. The cumulative number of different types of behaviors experienced by girl students (in percents) who did (*yes* group) and did not (*no* group) acknowledge sexual harassment

Table 9. Prevalence (%) of exposure (during entire school life) to various potentially offensive behaviors among girl students who did (*yes* group; N_{yes}=71) and did not (*no* group; N_{no}=465) indicate they have been sexually harassed

Behaviors	Prevalence of exposure % (n)			χ^2 (df=1)	Prevalence of *yes* in the exposed (%)
	total (N=536)	in *yes* group (N=71)	in *no* group (N=465)		
Verbal behaviors					
Sexualized conversations	80 (430)	96 (68)	78 (362)	12.14***	16
Attractiveness rating	79 (420)	97 (69)	76 (351)	16.57***	16
Sexual personal comments	78 (418)	97 (69)	75 (349)	17.21***	16
Name-calling – slut, whore, bitch, etc.	64 (343)	83 (59)	61 (284)	13.19***	17
Demeaning comments about gender/sexuality	63 (338)	86 (61)	60 (277)	18.03***	18
Sexual rumors	35 (184)	55 (39)	31 (145)	15.10***	21
Name calling – dyke, lesbian, fag, etc.	34 (179)	63 (45)	29 (135)	32.92***	25
Pressuring for sexual favors	33 (177)	65 (46)	28 (131)	37.00***	26
Pressuring for relationship	32 (168)	59 (42)	27 (126)	29.13***	25
Non-verbal displays					
Sexualized contact seeking	69 (370)	91 (65)	65 (305)	19.07***	18
Sexual looks	58 (308)	87 (62)	53 (246)	29.48***	20
Pulling clothing	55 (297)	79 (56)	52 (241)	35.86***	19
Brushing up or rubbing against	50 (268)	83 (59)	45 (209)	18.23***	22
Grabbing or pinching	50 (268)	80 (57)	46 (211)	29.31***	21
Showing pornography	19 (102)	39 (28)	16 (74)	21.91***	27
Sexual messages/graffiti	17 (92)	27 (19)	16 (73)	5.22*	21
Sexual assault					
Touching private body parts	40 (216)	77 (55)	35 (161)	46.78***	25
Cornering or holding and pulling clothing	10 (54)	35 (25)	6 (28)	56.91***	46
Teacher-to-student					
Inappropriate touching from a teacher or school staff	30 (161)	46 (33)	28 (128)	10.45***	20
Demeaning comments about gender or sexuality from a	22 (120)	42 (30)	19 (90)	18.59***	25
Suggestions, propositions or demands for sexual favors	4 (22)	14 (10)	3 (12)	20.71***	45

*p< 0.05
***p< 0.001

Perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment

The proportion of girl students believing that a particular behavior was a problem (present/likely to happen) in their school was higher among the students reporting sexual harassment in general as a problem in their schools. This applied to all of the measured behaviors (Table 10). The perception of sexual harassment as a problem in one's own school was common (over 60%), when the girls perceived a specific behavior as a problem in their school. This was particularly true for the most severe behaviors, such as cornering or holding and pulling clothing, forced sex, and pulling clothing, and brushing or rubbing against. Many behaviors, however, especially in the verbal category, were identified as problems in schools by a majority of girls regardless of group. The associations between the specific behaviors and sexual harassment in general (SH) were higher for the perception variables than for the exposure variables, indicating that the behaviors seen as problems were less likely to be dismissed as sexual harassment than personal experiences were. This was especially true for the most common behaviors considered.

A majority of the girls reporting sexual harassment in general as a problem in their schools also reported multiple types of potentially offensive sex-related behaviors. Many girls who did not think sexual harassment was a problem in their schools, however, also identified multiple types of the relevant behaviors as problems (Figure 2).

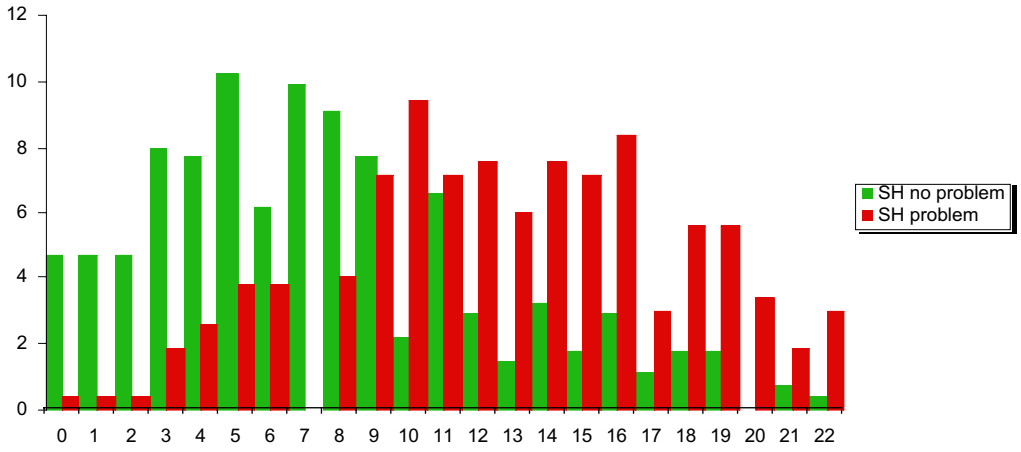

Figure 2. The cumulative number of different types of behaviors reported as problems in school, by girls students (in percents) who did (*SH problem*) and did not (*SH no problem*) perceive SH as a problem in their school

Table 10. Prevalence (%) of perception of potentially offensive behaviors as actual/potential problems among girl students who did (*SH problem* group; $N_{problem}$=266) and did not (*SH no problem* group; $N_{no\ problem}$=274) indicate SH was a problem in their school

Behaviors	Prevalence of perception of an actual behavior as a problem in % (n)			χ^2 (df=1)	Prevalence of perception of SH as a problem in the group perceiving an actual behavior as a problem (%)
	Total (n=540)	*SH problem* (n=266)	*SH no problem* (n=274)		
Verbal behaviors					
Sexual personal comments	76 (411)	92 (245)	61 (166)	73.78***	60
Attractiveness rating	75 (406)	84 (223)	67 (183)	21.02***	55
Name calling – slut, whore, bitch, etc.	68 (369)	86 (228)	51 (141)	73.19***	62
Sexual rumors	67 (362)	83 (220)	52 (142)	58.25***	61
Demeaning comments about gender/sexuality	63 (342)	77 (205)	50 (137)	42.58***	60
Name-calling – dyke, lesbian, fag, etc.	62 (333)	79 (210)	45 (123)	66.22***	63
Sexualized conversations	61 (332)	71 (189)	52 (143)	20.28***	57
Pressuring for relationship	33 (180)	42 (112)	25 (68)	18.15***	62
Pressuring for sexual favors	31 (170)	44 (116)	20 (54)	35.74***	68
Non-verbal displays					
Grabbing or pinching	59 (319)	73 (194)	46 (125)	41.64***	61
Sexualized contact seeking	58 (315)	76 (201)	42 (114)	64.03***	64
Sexual messages/graffiti	55 (296)	68 (180)	42 (116)	34.97***	61
Sexual looks	45 (242)	60 (160)	30 (82)	49.85***	66
Brushing up or rubbing against	33 (177)	48 (128)	18 (49)	56.00***	72
Showing pornography	30 (163)	40 (107)	20 (56)	25.08***	66
Pulling clothing	23 (126)	36 (97)	11 (29)	50.54***	77
Sexual assault					
Touching private body parts	48 (262)	64 (170)	34 (92)	49.72***	65
Cornering or holding and pulling clothing	18 (96)	27 (73)	8 (23)	33.51***	76
Forced sex	15 (80)	23 (60)	7 (20)	24.90***	75
Teacher-to-student					
Inappropriate touching from a teacher or school staff	38 (205)	47 (125)	29 (80)	18.15***	61
Demeaning comments about gender or sexuality from a teacher or school staff	37 (202)	48 (129)	27 (73)	27.53***	64
Suggestions, propositions or demands for sexual favors from a teacher or school staff	15 (79)	19 (51)	10 (28)	8.66**	65

**p< 0.005
***p< 0.001

Tests of the three proposed models

Fit indices derived from confirmatory factor analyses of the proposed models are shown in Tables 11 and 12. For girls, the fit was close to acceptable, although not particularly good for all models; by contrast, all models showed a very bad fit for boys. Chi-square analyses showed a significantly better fit for Gruber's model than for the other models, but the other indicators of fit differed very little among the models.

None of the three proposed models showed a substantially better fit than the one-factor model. In the one-factor model for girls, the five variables with the highest loadings were personal sexual comments, pressuring for sex, sexualized contact seeking, brushing up or rubbing against, and attractiveness rating; an index based on these variables had an estimated reliability (Cronbach alpha) of 0.83. For boys, the variables with highest loadings were brushing up or rubbing against, pressuring for sex, rating of attractiveness, having sexual rumors spread, and personal sexual comments; the alpha value for an index based on these items was 0.77.

Table 11. Model-fit indices for girls

Model	Chi2 (df, *p*)	Chi2/df	RMSEA (90% confidence interval)	CFI
Fitzgerald	330 (89, *p*<.001)	3.71	.073 (.065-.082)	.89
Larkin	355 (88, *p*<.001)	4.03	.078 (.007-.086)	.88
Gruber	320, (87, *p*<.001)	3.68	.074 (.065-.082)	.90
One factor	340 (90, *p*<.001)	3.78	.075 (.066-.083)	.89
Nested: one general factor, two specific factors (model with best fit)	241 (86, *p*<.001)	2.80	.061 (.052-.070)	.93
Nested: one general factor, two specific factors (boys' model)	Failed to converge			.

Table 12. Model-fit indices for boys

Model	Chi2 (df, *p*)	Chi2/df	RMSEA (90% confidence interval)	CFI
Fitzgerald	648 (89, *p*<.001)	7.30	.136 (.130-.150)	.77
Larkin	654 (88, *p*<.001)	7.43	.134 (.130-.140)	.77
Gruber	587 (87 *p*<.001)	6.75	.129 (.120-.140)	.79
One factor	671 (90, *p*<.001)	7.45	.137 (.130-.150)	.76
Nested: one general factor, two specific factors (model with best fit)	282 (79, *p*<.001)	3.56	.079 (.069-.089)	.92
Nested: one general factor, two specific factors (girls' model)	520 (86, *p*<.001)	6.05	.123 (.110-.130)	.82

Development and testing of alternative models

Because no model showed a satisfactory fit – for either boys or girls – alternative models with a better fit were constructed. The fact that the one-factor model did not show a substantially worse fit than any of the other models makes it reasonable to suppose that there is a general sexual harassment factor. However, because even the fit of the one-factor model was not satisfactory, the variance of some of the behaviors is not explained fully by a general harassment factor.

A proper model, therefore, would be a nested model with one general factor and one or more specific factors. A basis for the development of such nested models was, apart from theoretical considerations, modification indices in the test of the one-factor model. The model generated for girls was also tested for boys, and vice-versa. The models and factor loadings derived from these analyses are given in Table 13 (See Tables 11 and 12 for the indices).

Table 13. Factor structure matrix for boys and girls, with loadings from confirmatory analyses of nested models with one general and two specific factors

Survey items	Girls' nested model			Boys' nested model		
	General Factor	Spec. factor A	Spec. factor B	General factor	Spec. factor C	Spec. factor D
2. Pressuring for relationship	.88			.76		
10. Demeaning comments/jokes about gender/sexuality	.88			.30		.85
7. Sexual rumors	.86			.78		
15. Showing pornography	.85			.40	.58	
3. Sexualized conversations	.81			.26		.81
13. Sexual looks	.79			.75		
9. Rating attractiveness	.74			.25		.77
1. Pressuring for sex	.72			.73		
6. Personal sexual comments/jokes	.71			.44		.74
14. Sexualized contact seeking	.67			.24	.75	
8. Sexual messages/graffiti	.23	.94		.51	.73	
4. Name calling – slut, whore	.51	.81		.63		.67
5. Name calling - lesbian, fag	.63	.72		.71		.58
12. Pulling clothing	.19		.81	.74		
11. Brushing up or rubbing against	.64		.36	-.44	.55	

Spec. factor A *verbal/symbolic;*
Spec. factor B *direct physical*
Spec. factor C *pornography and sexualized horseplay*
Spec. factor D *sexual banter*

The nested model for girls comprised one general harassment factor and two specific factors (A and B). The specific factor A, labeled *verbal/symbolic*, included three verbal items: two sexual name calling items (slut/whore, and fag/lesbian), and personal sexual messages/graffiti. No improvement to fit was achieved by having any of the other items in the models load on A. The specific factor B, labeled *direct physical contact*, comprised brushing up or rubbing against, and pulling clothing – two directly physical types of behaviors.

The nested model with the best fit for the boys' data also comprised one general harassment factor and two specific factors (C and D), but the specific factors were different from those found for girls. The specific factor C, labeled *pornography and sexualized horseplay,* included personal sexual messages/graffiti, exposure to pornography, sexualized contact seeking, and also brushing up or rubbing against. The boys' second specific factor (D), labeled *sexual banter*, comprised sexual name-calling, personal sexual comments, demeaning comments about gender and sexuality, sexualized conversations, and rating attractiveness. The nested model constructed for girls showed a very bad fit to the boys' data. Also, the boys' nested model was tested on the girls' data, but the iterations failed to converge.

Discussion

Girls' experience and perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment in one school year

Exposure to behaviors related to sexual harassment

Verbal behaviors were found to be the most common in the girls' school environment reports, followed by non-verbal displays, sexual assault and teacher-to-student sexual harassment. Demeaning comments, sexualized conversations, attractiveness ratings and sexual personal comments were the most common verbal behaviors. Sexualized contact seeking and sexual looks were the most common displays in the non-verbal category, followed by brushing up and rubbing against. The measured exposures were over a period of one school year. Compared with the findings of Hostile Hallways, the largest US study of sexual harassment in schools (AAUW, 2001), the frequencies obtained in this study were lower for all comparable questions in all categories of surveyed behaviors. Sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks (the most common category of events) were reported by 73% of female respondents in the Hostile Hallways (AAUW) study, but by only 61% of respondents in our Swedish study. Other common behaviors in the AAUW survey, such as touching, grabbing, or pinching, brushing up and rubbing, sexual rumors, and pulling clothing, were also found to be less frequent. The AAUW survey found that 38% of female respondents were exposed to teacher-to-student sexual harassment (AAUW, 2001). In the current study, 14% reported demeaning sexual comments or jokes, 12% inappropriate touching, and 2% sexual propositions or demands from teachers or school staff. There are some significant differences between study groups and forms of data collection between the studies. The AAUW survey used a sample of 8 to 11 grade students (approximate age 14-18), and many overt harassing behaviors were found to be more prevalent in the lower grades. Formulation of questions was also different. The Hostile Hallways survey strictly focused on unwanted and upsetting situations, whereas the current study asked respondents to report all kinds of situations, also the ones considered "a joke". The time frame of the Hostile Hallways questionnaire was much broader, encompassing the entire school life of respondents, whereas this paper analyses exposure over the last school year. The direction and level of the difference suggests that employing a broad definition of harassment will not unreasonably inflate the results. Analysis of the efficiency of specific question formulation in measuring sexual harassment suggests that more general questions actually yield lower recognition, and hence give lower frequencies (Gruber, 1997).

Unfortunately, there are no comparable Swedish studies on sexual harassment in schools. The available data are from small, local and unrepresentative surveys with unreviewed administration and measurement procedures, and different age groups. The only other large sampled Swedish school study, among Stockholm's girl students in 1993, yielded mostly comparable results for comparable questions (Kullenberg & Ehrenlans, 1996). Forty seven per cent of the girls believed that

sexual harassment was a problem present in their schools as compared to 49% in this study. Reported exposure to verbal types of behaviors was: for sex jokes, 77% (56% to 77% in this study); for sexual comments, 37% (65% in this study); for sexual rumors, 16% (25% in this study); and for sexual propositioning 8% (26% in this study). Inappropriate touching and grabbing was reported by 30% of the respondents from Stockholm's schools as compared to 13% and 27% in this study. Sex jokes from teachers were reported by 16% and 14% respectively. A European comparison of results of surveys of adult workers showed the lowest incidence of sexual harassment in Denmark and Sweden (Timmerman, 1999). The differences in measurement techniques makes this comparison also difficult to interpret. However, the results from this study support the notion that exposure to sexual harassment of Swedish students may be actually lower than their US peers. Comparison between different survey results is always difficult. Divergent question formulation, different time frames, varying lengths of questionnaires, numbers of points on the sexual harassment scale and different ways of survey administration all contribute to differences in results (Fineran & Bennett, 1998; Timmerman, 1999). Nevertheless, the scale of the problem in Swedish schools has to be taken into consideration.

Perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment

Sexual harassment was identified by 49% of our respondents as a problem in school, and 15% believed this problem was serious. In the Hostile Hallways study (2001) 78% of both boys and girls stated that sexual harassment was present in their school. Most available studies of perceptions of sexual harassment involve hypothetical scenarios. Our study asked about perceptions of actual behaviors in schools as problems in the school environment. Sexual rumors, demeaning jokes or comments, sex-related personal comments and calling names appeared to be the most problematic for female students who had been exposed to them during the last school year. The kinds of verbal behaviors that were also most problematic for non-exposed individuals were personal comments (61%, 39% of those considered serious), sexual rumors (60%, 35% serious), being called names such as slut, whore (59%, 40% serious), being called names such as lesbian, fag (57%, 25% serious), and attractiveness ratings (57%, 25% serious). They were the most prevalent behaviors, and a relatively large number of students must have been aware of their presence. In all four categories the respondents who reported exposure to a particular behavior were significantly more likely to identify that behavior as an actual/potential problem in their school and to see it as a serious problem. However, many non-exposed respondents also perceived the behaviors as problems, some of them as serious, in their school. They may have been exposed to them in the past, witnessed them, or have heard about them. Harassment in the school environment creates an invisible yet very real threat of hostility of which students are well aware (Larkin, 1994; Schneider, 1997).

Boys' experiences and perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment in one school year

Exposure to behaviors related to sexual harassment

The exposure data from boy respondents generally fell between AAUW on the one hand and Dahinten and McMaster on the other, just as it was for the girls (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 2001; McMaster et al., 2002). The highest rates were consistently obtained in the AAUW study. Again, these differences can most likely be ascribed to the fact that procedures adopted varied between investigators. In terms of the measured time-frame, AAUW asked for lifetime exposure, our study for the last school year, Dahinten for the last 2 months, and McMaster for the last 6 weeks. The samples also differed in age. The AAUW study included younger, 8th to 11th grade, students (approximate age 14-18), while Dahinten had 9-11 grade students (15-18 year olds), and we had 17-18 year olds. McMaster's participants were the youngest (10-14 year olds), and there is not much data available for this age group. Generally, the levels of boys' reported exposure, like in other youth studies, were surprisingly high compared to the results from adult, workplace studies (Hand & Sanchez, 2000). The most common forms of behaviors reported in our study were verbal behaviors and non-verbal displays, while teacher-to-student harassment was rare. The behaviors classified as assaults split in two prevalence groups. Grabbing or pinching, and touching private body parts were as frequent as some of the verbal, and non-verbal displays, while cornering or holding and pulling clothes, and forcing to have sex were very infrequent. This appears to support the findings from other studies that physical rough behaviors are common amongst boys in school and considered "horseplay" among equals. Forcing to have sex, and cornering and holding describe completely different situations characterized by disempowerment and control. As expected, not all behaviors had the same significance for participating boys. Attractiveness rating and sexual messages/graffiti were by far considered most traumatic.

Perceptions of behaviors related to sexual harassment

Potentially offensive verbal behaviors were the most commonly identified as problems in one's school. Homophobic name calling was one of the most upsetting, in accordance with other youth reports (AAUW, 2001; Roscoe et al., 1994; Shakeshaft et al., 1995; White, 2000). Physical attacks, like grabbing and pinching was seen as more of a threat than any other non-verbal or assaultive behavior. Touching private body parts came second. Both kinds of behaviors were seen as potential threats by about a half of all male respondents, those who had experienced it and those who had not. Also, sexualized contact seeking, sexual messages, graffiti, and sexual looks were frequently considered problems by boys in this study, like US boys in the AAUW study. Among our respondents, those who reported exposure to a particular behavior were significantly more likely to identify that behavior as a potential or current problem in their school. Peer harassment was considered more of a problem/threat than teacher-to-student approaches, which were rare.

Gender differences in sexual harassment in schools: issues of interpretation

The obtained pattern of gender differences was not unexpected (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 2001; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; McMaster et al., 2002; Roscoe et al., 1994; Shakeshaft et al., 1995; White, 2000). Girls dominated experiences of most forms of measured behaviors, with the exception of homophobic name calling and showing pornography, and rougher physical behaviors such as pulling clothing, brushing up or rubbing against, touching private body parts, and grabbing or pinching, which were more commonly reported by boys. The differences in particular exposures, however, were not large. Especially in terms of the verbal behaviors, and many non-verbal displays, it appears that the school environment is saturated with questionable situations that, at least potentially, may result in harassment. Thus, it becomes unclear the extent to which the prevalence, or frequency, obtained from the check list answers are accurate reflections of real life exposures. Is 77% or 66% exactly that or just a result of an approximation made by students overwhelmed by constant stream of normalized problematic situations directed at them, at their friends or just in general? Can both rates be statistically compared in that case? Statistical analyses of experiences with skewed distributions generally present a significant problem.

Sexual name-calling, for instance, and pressuring for sex and a relationship, present interpretation problems. Homophobic name calling was reported by more than three times as many boys as girls in this study. This finding is not contrary to the results from other studies (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 2001; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; McMaster et al., 2002; Roscoe et al., 1994; Shakeshaft et al., 1995; White, 2000). Just as being 'easy' implies worthlessness for a girl, sexual immaturity and homosexuality implies worthlessness for a boy and will be the sexual insult of choice against a boy (Duncan, 1999; Robinson, 2005). However, when we looked at the levels of concern about the homophobic name calling, we found no gender difference. The majority (over 50%), of both boys and girls believed this particular behavior was a problem in their schools, although girls reported very low levels of personal experience with homophobic name calling. Surprisingly, there was no reversed pattern of exposure by gender for the most common insult directed at girls – being called a “slut, whore, or bitch”, and this variable showed no gender difference regarding actual exposure. Apparently, both boys and girls are equally likely to experience this type of situation, although it is not very clear what the meaning and relevance of using “slut” or “whore” against a boy actually is. The term “bitch” can be used with homophobic connotation. But it is not even the level of boys’ exposure that is perplexing, but the comparatively low level of the reported exposure by girls. Are boys really called those names as often as girls are, which was not very often in this study? If we believe the low levels of reported personal exposure, why, then, do a majority of our respondent think it is a problem in their schools? The levels of concern about this behavior were found to be high similar to the levels of concern about homophobic name calling. Offensive sexual name calling is the most common type of sexual harassment in schools, and often used as a signifier for sexual harassment, as in one school

based campaign against sexual harassment and discrimination, “Have you called anybody a whore today?” This verbal behavior is common and as good as normalized in many schools and the only way to interpret the surprisingly low number of girls who chose to report it in our study is that denying it ever happening, or mattering enough to remember and complain, is the only way, left to the girls, of resisting its power. The subversive use and interpretation of insults has some most impressive proponents, but to create the “subversive confusion” (Butler, 1990, p. 177) is by no means straightforward, as I am reminded reading a mother’s letter to a Swedish newspaper: “...my ten-year-old daughter was called a ‘dirty fucking whore’...”. The effectiveness of adolescent girls appropriating sexual insults to counteract their power to offend is questionable, and tainted by strongly class related willingness to use and condone the use of those expressions (Ambjörnsson, 2004; Butler, 1990; Walkerdine, 1990). The high proportions of students, both exposed and unexposed, that saw the verbal sexual insults as problems in their schools, seem to better reflect the level of the presence of those in the school environment

In terms of pressuring for sex or relationship from peers and teachers, again, the low levels of gender difference in reported exposure raise questions. Can we really conclude from our data that nowadays it is as likely for a boy to be pressured for sex at school, that it is for a girl? Are we to assume that the social and emotional costs of sexual predatory behaviors are equivalent for both genders? Are the contexts of rape and sexual violence unrelated to the freedom of sexual expression by youth of both genders? It is highly unlikely that experiencing even vague pressures or threats for sexual compliance are as common and as threatening for both boys and girls. More likely, different filters are used to classify situations by persons of different gender, or different sexual orientation, and our questions are therefore filtered by the respondents in ways that do not allow for simple comparisons of the data without regard to theories of gender.

As another example, attractiveness rating was an experience that most boys saw as problem in their school. From our data, attractiveness rating seemed to be a highly relevant experience for boys. Over 60% reported the experience, and almost 70% thought of it as a problem. Girls’ reported prevalence of episodes of attractiveness rating was statistically significantly higher than boys’, but the difference was small. Another confusing aspect was that sexual looks (seen as a problem by about 40% of the exposed and unexposed boys, and experienced by over 30%) were reported by fewer respondents than one would expect, judging by the prevalence of attractiveness rating. It is understandable that sexual looks may present less of a problem than attractiveness rating, and be easier to disregard. In terms of exposure, however, one might expect that sexual evaluative looks would be a prerequisite for attractiveness rating, but clearly they are not in this age group, or at least they were not perceived like that by our participants. The interpretation of both types of experiences is unclear from a check list survey, and small gender differences in exposure pose serious questions. What does it mean in terms of the objectifying gaze, that well established concept related to the exploitation of girls’ and women’s bodies? Can we now conclude that boys’ bodies

are exploited in the public sphere to a comparable degree to girls' bodies? Or, that objectification of girls is so normalized that even girls are unable, and perhaps unwilling, vigilantly to take notice of and complain about every violation? Certainly, in our study, boys were almost as inclined to see their own objectification as a problem in their schools as girls were.

Contexts of gender, power and sexuality in sexual harassment in schools
Sexual harassment and objectification of girls play a role in the (re)creation of "the public and private positions of hegemonic masculinity within a heterosexualized gender order" (Robinson, 2005, p. 20). Most of the respondents of both genders indicated they were familiar with the meaning of sexual harassment. They generally credited the media for their knowledge. Thirty nine percent of the boys and 49% of the girls considered sexual harassment a problem in their school (Witkowska & Gillander Gådin, 2005). Despite this belief, and, as mentioned before, high levels of exposure to the potentially problematic situations, only very few of the boys – and not so many more of the girls – acknowledged they had been sexually harassed in school. They did seem to feel uncomfortable about the situation in their schools – about a half of them believed there was a problem there. Is then sexual harassment a problem in the respondents schools or isn't it? What do the respondents classify as harassment? What do they actually know about what is considered as harassment by schools and school boards? Giving other students offensive sexual names, ridiculing another student's gender or sexual orientation, or inappropriate advances or comments from school staff, are not acceptable in schools, and yet the students find ways to not consider it harassment when its related to them personally. The respondents generally seem to have a keen understanding of what is condoned and "normal", that relates to their keen perception of informal structures and norms governing in their schools, and in the society at large. Their text descriptions of situations in their schools (reported in an unpublished analysis by Sjöström and the author) reveal great sensitivity to all intersecting markers of power structures such as gender, age, class, and race. Students prioritize defending their positions on those dimensions, and so they have to negotiate the sexual harassment in the context of those markers. This awareness of the informal, or rather not explicitly mentioned factors, overshadows the official attempts of the schools to define and prevent sexual harassment that appear more of the type of "do as I say, not as I do". Only very few girls reported that they had been "sexually harassed" in the survey (Witkowska & Gillander Gådin, 2005), yet the above mentioned qualitative analysis of text answers revealed that sexual harassment was regarded exclusively as girls' business. Very few boys reported they had been "sexually harassed", and only half of those who chose to describe the experience reported feeling upset, shamed, or shocked by it. The only type of incidents described by the harassed boys were homophobic incidents. This inconsistency and confusion emerging from survey data suggest that young people encounter serious problems when dealing with issues of sexuality and power, just as any generation that preceded them, but today, perhaps even

more so. Both genders struggle trapped in a culture that leaves them little more than their gendered bodies as their social identity (Duncan, 1999; Hägg, 2003).

In Sweden, the official discourse about adolescent sexuality is that sex is a positive and important health and emotional resource, and portraying youth sex in negative terms is discouraged. Yet, somewhat disengaged from that sexuality discourse, there has been a steady undercurrent bringing to the public eye instances of abuse of power leading to sexual exploitation, such as allowing the spread of semi-pornographic images in public space, prostitution, and other forms of objectification of women and sex.[1] The sexual exploitation and violence against women, and very young women as well, is an integral part of the sexual realm, and the girls are very much aware of this. The promise of problem free, and for both genders alike, access to sex as a source of empowerment, and, at the same time, the clearly present danger of being exploited, creates a confusing reality in which young people are not helped in ongoing reevaluations of their positions and decisions, but forced instead into a polarized two option construction (Tolman, 2003). The Madonna-whore dichotomy is still very much present in youth cultural consciousness and girls are offered only polarized positions on the pleasure-danger dimension of sexuality where they can only choose one and reject the other (Tolman, 2003). This forces them to struggle, on a discursive level, to sustain that dichotomy, rather than helping them to creatively look for their own solutions and sexual identities. The necessity of maintaining the dichotomy between the official discourse of fairness – not appearing victimized in inter-gender relations, and the unofficial unfair practices, has been also described in other studies (Larkin, 1994; Magnusson, 1997; Tolman, 2003). Women today may be caught in an interesting dynamic. As the economic and political power of women increases, the traditional "women's virtues" such as chastity, sexual modesty etc decrease in value. However, the changes on both dimensions are progressing at an unequal pace. The change of "morals" may have moved faster than the participation in power, and what is defined as inappropriate and offensive has more to do with expecting women to be sexual agents and not "uptight", without the component of equal power to have their way in organizations.

Interpretation of the issues of sexuality and power, and, in particular, gendered violence, has not been uniform within feminist theory either. Girls are not supported enough in this confusing socio-cultural landscape to acknowledge and report sexual harassment without assuming a victim identity, and can be accused of being non-sexual outsiders of the sexual discourse inscribed in popular youth culture and seen as enactments of power and adulthood.

No answers generated in the open question section (in the unpublished analysis by Sjöström and the author), addressed boys' responsibility for harassing, and the discursive space for boys to act and harass sexually seemed to be unlimited, even when harassment was described as a problem. As both, victims and perpetrators, men and boys are in an ambiguous position in relation to sexual harassment.

---

[1] In Sweden trafficking and purchasing sexual services are criminal offenses, but selling sexual services is not.

Sexual harassment is an enactment of power through sexuality, and is used to build hierarchical differences between boys and between masculinities, in which aggressive heterosexual masculinity is superior. Positioning oneself against or even outside of this practice carries a danger for a young man of being labeled non-sexual and non-masculine (Connell, 1995; Duncan, 1999; Robinson, 2005).

What female high school students regard as sexual harassment

While reported exposures to relevant situations were high, the proportion of girl students identifying themselves as harassed was comparatively low, illustrating a reluctance to label any relevant experience as harassment – as reported in other studies. The most severe, least common behaviors, such as cornering and pulling clothing, and teachers pressuring for sex, were the least likely to be dismissed. The participants who reported exposure to them were more likely to acknowledge harassment. These findings are supportive of the existing view that the level of severity of one's own experiences is related to acknowledging harassment (AAUW, 2001; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Gruber, 1990; Magley et al., 1999). The physical variables have been classified as severe in other studies of adult workers (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Gruber, 1992; Lee, 2001; Loredo et al., 1995; Magley et al., 1999; Terrance et al., 2004) and younger populations (AAUW, 2001; Corbett et al., 1993; Frazier et al., 1995; Houston & Hwang, 1996; Larkin, 1994). However, since Dahinten (2001) and Larkin (1994) found gender harassment to be highly upsetting to their adolescent female respondents, at least theoretically, students seem to agree that both "gender harassment" and "inappropriate sexual advances" are wrong. The fact that pulling clothing, touching private body parts, grabbing or pinching, and inappropriate touching from teacher or school staff are relatively common but at high risk of being dismissed as sexual harassment, is an interesting and alarming finding from this study. Exposure to multiple types of potentially offensive behaviors, and experiencing more severe behaviors alongside the less severe, are also evident. The more severe behaviors are usually experienced along with other, less severe types of behaviors, so that "severity" is mixed with frequency and variety of exposure (Magley et al., 1999), and perpetrators of gender harassment are also more likely to perpetrate sexual advances/impositions (White, 2000).

Exposure to relevant behaviors, of varying levels of severity, alone is not enough to elicit acknowledgment, and girls who identify themselves as victims of harassment do so partly for other reasons. Two of the possible reasons, identified by Larkin (1994), such as sharing experiences with other harassed girls and information and support from schools, have found confirmation in this study. The girls who acknowledged harassment were less likely to name the media as the main source of information about sexual harassment, but more likely to refer to friends. These girls were also more likely to attend large schools where, possibly, there was more exposure to and awareness of different disciplinary problems. It seems possible that, through better information about sexual harassment, the level of acceptance can be changed. Although everybody in this study reported

knowing what sexual harassment was, it is not certain what they actually knew. Considering that the media was the major source of their knowledge, and the fact that only 4% knew their school had a policy dealing with sexual harassment, it can be assumed that their knowledge did not include a clear, or workable, definition of sexual harassment. The girls who acknowledged harassment were more likely to believe that they knew more about sexual harassment than the "not harassed". Also, they were more likely to report that sexual harassment in general, and all of the potentially offensive specific behaviors, were problems in their schools.

Normalization factors identified in other studies, such as routine prevalence and lack of support from schools (Berman et al., 2000; Dahinten, 2001; Duncan, 1999; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000; Larkin, 1994; Terrance et al., 2004), are corroborated in this study. Despite the fact that all of the measured behaviors were experienced with higher frequency in the group of students who acknowledged harassment, the differences were most pronounced in the case of the less frequent behaviors. Eventually, it seems that Giuffre and William's (1994) insightful interpretation – that recognition and labeling of experiences as harassing arises primarily from the violation of predominant norms of sexual interaction – holds for the adolescent population as well. The most frequent behaviors are clearly more likely to be judged as "normal", and accordingly as "not-sexual-harassment". Lack of involvement of schools – as evidenced by the low proportion of students with a known sexual-harassment policy and having school as a good resource for information – indicates that students may feel that their experiences of behaviors related to sexual harassment are not important. In a Swedish national study, more information and discussion about what sexual harassment really means, and better and stricter rules, were the main suggestions for taking action against sexual harassment (Menckel & Witkowska, 2002). In reality, however, many potentially offensive sex-related behaviors become normalized in the school environment or too difficult to address, for students as well as for teachers.

The upsetting characteristic of a behavior seems not the only criterion people use for defining an act as harassment (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 1999, 2001; Larkin, 1994; Lee, 2001). In this study, many students were found to have been subjected to potentially offensive behaviors without labeling them as sexual harassment, despite the fact that they did see many of the behaviors as problematic. Even if judged as upsetting, relevant experiences are often not labeled as harassment (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 1999, 2001). But nor are the behaviors endorsed (Larkin, 1994; Lee, 2001; Witkowska & Kjellberg, in press). Many of the girls who did not identify themselves as harassed still perceived most of the behaviors as problems in their schools. This would indicate that there is a strong resistance to labeling oneself as a victim of harassment (Stockdale & Vaux, 1993).

Structural analysis of peer sexual harassment in Swedish high schools

The existing models tested in this study—two workplace based factor analytic models (Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989; Gruber, 1992) and a qualitative peer harassment model (Larkin, 1994)—showed close to acceptable, although not very

good, fit to the girls' data, whereas for boys all models showed a very bad fit. None of the three proposed models showed a substantially better fit than a one-factor model, which indicated the need to test the presence of a general harassment factor. The nested models with one general sexual harassment factor and two specific factors turned out to be the ones with the best fit. However, the specific factors differed between girls and boys. For girls, the *verbal/symbolic* factor in the nested model included three items from Gruber's *verbal comments* category, which correspond to Fitzgerald's *gender harassment* factor and Larkin's *verbal* (2 items) and *other types* (1 item) factor. The *direct physical contact* factor was congruent with Larkin's *physical* factor, and the factor's items constituted a part of Gruber's *nonverbal displays* and Fitzgerald's *unwanted sexual attention*. The boys' nested model showed a somewhat worse fit and a less clear factor structure than the girls' model. The *pornography and sexualized horseplay* factor was made up of a mixture of items, and did not correspond to any of the factors proposed by the three tested models. It included one item from Gruber's *verbal comments* category (which corresponded to *gender harassment* in Fitzgerald, and *other types* in Larkin), and three *nonverbal displays* (which corresponded to *unwanted sexual attention* in Fitzgerald, and one to *physical* and two to *other types* in Larkin). The *sexual banter* factor, however, showed a rather close affinity to Fitzgerald's *gender harassment* factor and to Larkin's *verbal* factor. Both of the specific factors above seem to represent male-bonding types of behaviors related to sex – *pornography and sexualized horseplay* of a nonverbal nature, and *sexual banter* of a verbal nature.

Compared to the other factor analytic studies of peer sexual harassment in schools (Dahinten, 2001, 2003; Lacasse et al., 2003; McMaster et al., 2002), the structure developed in this study – for the girls, although not for the boys – was somewhat compatible with the severity differentiation in Lacasse's data. Also, in the *verbal/symbolic* factor all three items corresponded to similar items in Dahinten's *gender harassment* factor, and the two items in the *direct physical contact* factor corresponded to two similar items included in Dahinten's *sexual advances/imposition* factor. However, other variables that were measured by similar questions failed to organize in a similar way. As both Lacasse and Dahinten employed exploratory factor analysis, it is not known whether other structures would be compatible with their data. The present study, and McMaster's, indicate support for the existence of a general sexual harassment factor. However, McMaster identified different specific factors (*same-sex* and *other-sex* harassment). In the present study no consideration was taken as to whether actors were of same or different gender, and thus, the presence of such factors could not be tested. Because one and the same behavior may have different meanings depending on the sex of the perpetrator and other aspects of context, it would be important to incorporate contextual questions into sexual harassment scales.

Workplace structures did not seem to fit student data well in this study. Lacasse also did not replicate Fitzgerald's workplace factors, whereas Dahinten obtained two factors close to Fitzgerald's original dimensions of *gender harassment* and

unwanted sexual attention. One of the problems may be that, although most scales used in the youth studies were adapted from the original Hostile Hallways check list, with the exception of Lacasse's interesting adaptation of the SEQ, they are only compatible with each other to a degree. Earlier studies in workplace and in educational environments, also indicated a difficulty in establishing clear cross-gender and cross-setting factors between data sets (Baldwin & Daugherty, 2001; Stockdale & Hope, 1997).

In the present study, possible gender differences were explored by performing separate analyses of male and female students, and no acceptable model common to boys and girls could be identified. Furthermore, the severity dimension, which presumes that verbal/symbolic behaviors are less harassing than directly physical ones (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Lacasse et al., 2003; Murnen & Smolak, 2000), was found in the girls' model, but not in the boys' model. In the boys' model, low impact verbal behaviors appeared in the same specific factor as the more severe direct physical ones. Separation of genders appears analytically appropriate on the basis of the body of evidence, which suggests that similar behavioral experiences may have different meanings for men and women and will not be found equally upsetting by both genders (Berdahl et al., 1996; Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989; Waldo et al., 1998). Similar results have been presented for adolescent students (AAUW, 2001; Eliasson et al., 2005; Fineran, 2002; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; McMaster et al., 2002; Murnen & Smolak, 2000), although only Dahinten (2001, 2003) split the genders in her factor analyses (and obtained the same factor structure for both genders), whereas McMaster and Lacasse analyzed both genders together (Lacasse et al., 2003; McMaster et al., 2002). The significance of many situations differs between the genders, and any meaningful factor structure of sexual harassment would have to differ between boys and girls.

Nested models with a general sexual harassment factor showed a good fit to data both in the present study and in McMaster's study (McMaster et al., 2002). This finding supports the hypothesis that various behaviors in school create a sexualized environment and increase the probability of peer sexual harassment – the dynamic also found in the workplace (Gruber, 1992; Mazzeo et al., 2001; Sev'er, 1996).

Methodological considerations and limitations

Survey method and response rate

Quantitative approaches using retrospective, self-report measures carry inherent difficulties in presenting complex social problems, and home-mail questionnaires chronically suffer from a low response rate. They offer, however, a high level of privacy and anonymity, which is desirable in studies of behaviors related to sexuality. Reporting in mail questionnaire studies on socially undesirable behaviors has been generally found to be comparable to or higher than in those employing other modes of data collection (Bongers & van Oers, 1998). Proper study design – such as a clear questionnaire, several reminders, etc. – can also reduce the non-response rate to a certain degree (Dillman, 1983). The cheapness

of the method is also often a decisive factor in social research. Some of the most prominent national Nordic studies of sexual harassment – such as FRID-A in 1987 in Sweden, the SAK study in 1995 in Finland, and Einarsen's study in 1993 in Norway – had response rates of around 50% (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; EU, 1998). The response rate of 59% for the female respondents in this survey can be considered satisfactory given the study group and the length of the questionnaire. The results obtained from male students, however, have to be interpreted very carefully. To identify possible sample bias, the survey-respondent group was compared with the population of Sweden on key demographic variables – geographical distribution, school size, and study programs attended. The distributions were generally found to correspond to the national composition of school enrollments, with the exception of study programs attended. Under-representation of students in non-academic programs and school dropouts was expected and explains some of the non-response. The length of the questionnaire and "pen-and-paper" administration naturally favors students of theoretical programs. They have greater skills and interest in the type of activities involved in participating. We have found no differences between students in theoretical and practical programs in terms of the exposure to different behaviors related to sexual harassment. A study in Stockholm's schools (Kullenberg & Ehrenlans, 1996) also found no differences in the reported levels of harassment between both groups. The response rate was adjusted for school dropouts on the basis of the proportion of youth in the age group not enrolled in high school nationwide. The participant group was representative of the Swedish student population, although there is no absolute basis on which non-response bias can be determined. Generally, we believe that the girl respondents' sample was reasonably representative of Swedish students of comparable age, whereas the boys' sample should possibly be regarded as a convenience sample.

The study population was relatively old in student terms. However, choosing this group allowed the capture of longer school experience in the long-term questions, and in the text questions, greater capability for reflection on the matter.

Definition and questionnaire

Formulation of items in a questionnaire that would both yield results comparable with other studies and advancing knowledge in a relatively unexplored area is a difficult task. The survey was exploratory by nature, and the questionnaire employed had not been psychometrically validated. Thus, it may not fully have represented the higher order construct in which sexual harassment actually consists. In this study we do not, at any point, use the behavioral scales as forming an additive representation of sexual harassment as a construct.

This study employed a very broad theoretical and operational definition of sexual harassment. The results suggests that employing a broad definition of harassment will not unreasonably inflate the results. Analysis of the efficiency of specific question formulation in measuring sexual harassment suggests that more general questions actually yield lower recognition, and hence give lower frequencies. Lack of questions establishing contextual factors of the incidents may be

considered a weakness. However, this study asked about specific behaviors so that sexual harassment was operationalized very specifically.

Gender differences

Thus far, most of the prevalence research has employed methodologies and tools derived from research of women workers exposure to sexual harassment and our questionnaire was built based on scales developed for women and girls. Data obtained from this type of surveys may be inadequate to map out and understand male experiences. It is likely that the questionnaire in the present and most other studies is more valid for description of sexual harassment experienced by girls than harassment directed at boys. The reformulation of questions to make them gender neutral is not enough to avoid this bias. Also, gender of the actors has been found relevant, and the questionnaire does not address those issues.

It is possible that the low response rate in the present study means that those boys who have chosen to participate may have been the ones with greater interest, and/or personal experiences with sexual harassment, and the results therefore may be elevated. The high proportion of students exposed repeatedly suggests that our boy group may have been self-selected among respondents who have had the most exposure to the potentially harassing behaviors. Other youth studies, however, also feature high rates of exposure to relevant behaviors in their boy samples (AAUW, 2001; Dahinten, 2003; McMaster et al., 2002).

Structural accuracy of the models

Accuracy of a structural construct obtained from survey data is greatly dependent on the operationalization of the construct in the employed scales. In the present study, the aim to use a questionnaire that fit a theoretical construct had to be combined with a need to produce the best descriptive picture of the actual situation in the surveyed schools. Thus, the representation of the models of sexual harassment may have been distorted. We have made an effort to best match the items used in our questionnaire to the ones originally used by Gruber and Fitzgerald, and allocate them accordingly, but the fact that our items were different than the ones originally used to construct the analyzed workplace models does not allow for any final conclusions regarding the comparison of factor solutions in this study to the factor solutions in workplace studies. Given the limited number of large-scale studies dedicated to sexual harassment in school, cross-validation of our findings against a new sample of students is needed. This is especially true for the nested models which were developed to fit data and thus were not based on a priori hypotheses.

Implications for prevention and future research

Have you been sexually harassed in school?

Sexual harassment is prevalent in Swedish schools. Students are exposed to a variety of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors (verbal, non-verbal, assaultive, and teacher-to-student) of a sexual nature, or based on gender, that potenti-

ally infringe on their right to a supportive, respectful and safe learning environment, or their dignity. Many students are subjected to many of the potentially offensive behaviors without labeling them as sexual harassment, despite the fact that they see the behaviors as problematic. Furthermore, viewing the relevant behaviors as problems in one's school does not necessarily lead to acknowledging that "sexual harassment" is a problem there. However, the behaviors seen as problems in one's school are less likely to be dismissed as "sexual harassment" than one's own experiences, and this is especially true for the most common, verbal behaviors. There is a strong resistance to labeling oneself as a victim of harassment, and a general avoidance of the "sexual harassment" label, and researchers and educators need to adjust their measurement and prevention methods to counteract this problem.

Normalization of sexual harassment in schools

This project adds empirical support to existing evidence that, despite the fact that not only verbal but also many physical behaviors are commonplace in schools, there is a low level of acknowledgment, and the behaviors are largely normalized (Berman et al., 2000; Dahinten, 2001; Duncan, 1999; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000; Larkin, 1994; Terrance et al., 2004). Despite the fact that all of the measured behaviors were experienced with higher frequency in the group of students who acknowledged harassment, the differences were most pronounced in the case of the less frequent behaviors. The most frequent behaviors are clearly more likely to be judged as "normal", and accordingly as "not-sexual-harassment". Lack of involvement of schools – as evidenced by the low proportion of students with a known sexual-harassment policy and having their school as a good resource for information – leaves students feeling their experiences of behaviors related to sexual harassment are not important. Students' main suggestions for taking action against sexual harassment are: more information and discussion about what sexual harassment really means, and better and stricter rules (Menckel & Witkowska, 2002). Despite the fact that it may be difficult for the educators to react to every incident of harassment, condoning harassment is against the law, and violates students' rights. Even the relatively less injurious forms of sexual harassment can't be ignored because sexual harassment is a multilevel process, and the most severe behaviors emerge not as separate phenomena but as extreme manifestations alongside other less severe types of behaviors.

Gender differences in sexual harassment in schools

Answers from both boys and girls directly or indirectly imply that sexual harassment is something that victimizes girls, and, that it must be something very serious, close to rape (Larkin, 1994; Robinson, 2005). Thus far, most prevalence research in this arena, including the present study, has employed methodologies and tools derived from research into women's exposure to sexual harassment. Data obtained from these types of surveys may be inadequate to map out and understand men's experiences (Waldo et al., 1998; White, 1997). The scales employed also run a risk of not being sensitive to the behavioral experiences of

men that women do *not* experience. For example, men may be pressured into engaging in stereotypical, heterosexual, masculine behaviors, or ridiculed in response to crossing that behavioral boundary (Vaux, 1993; Waldo et al., 1998). The significance of many situations differs between the genders, and any meaningful factor structure of sexual harassment would have to differ between boys and girls. Scales constructed for boys need to be used for the measurement of boys' experience of sexual harassment in schools (Waldo et al., 1998; White, 1997).

Gender differences in willingness to notice and voice ones problems depend on the type of a situations and their context, and will be strongly influenced by what is considered compatible with the respective gender roles, "femininity", and "masculinity". Generally, women are believed to be the ones who complain easily over everything, and often women's reports and requests for help are seen as exaggerated and not taken seriously. For example, results of research on pain are that women are more susceptible to pain than men are, and suffer from pain more frequently and at more intense levels. Yet health care providers seem less inclined to take women's complaints of pain seriously. Even though women are more likely to seek treatment for their pain, they are less likely to receive it ("The girl who cried pain", from: www.aslme.org/research/mayday/29.1_pdf/hoffmann.pdf). With this bias in mind, researchers and practitioners have to avoid regarding data on sexual harassment collected from women to be an exact reflection of actual experiences, or even "over-reported", while considering data from men as "under-reported". There is evidence suggesting that men and boys are quite inclined to protest when their dominance and privileges are threatened (Duncan, 1999; Gillander Gådin & Hammarstrom, 2000; Öhrn, 1998; Quinn, 2002). It has to be understood that, in the public sphere, both sexuality and academic achievement are spheres new to women and girls, historically speaking, and tallying up the instances of sexual harassment in schools can be an experience threatening to the feeling of power and agency, for the girls, in ways that relate to a special vulnerability not experienced by boys.

School, gendered power and sexuality

Boys and girls, on the one hand, seem to believe that sex is positive, necessary, and good to express (in the unpublished analysis by Sjöström and the author). On the other hand, in the text answers, many girls describe incidents of harassment, and feeling offended, sometimes deeply; that the experience was unpleasant, degrading, and that it generated feelings of being alone, worthless, helpless, sad and in some cases afraid. Both, "no problem" and "problem", discourses of sexuality in school exist together side by side, and create extreme categories of evaluation of behaviors and situations. The dichotomy between "sex as joke and part of friendship/youth culture" and "sexual harassment as something very serious, close to rape" seemed crucial, and, on a discursive level students' answers illustrate the struggle to maintain this dichotomy. Since sex is an important part of the jargon and social code for youth, acknowledging and reporting sexual harassment has the consequence of excluding oneself from the peer group. Additionally,

in adolescence, peer groups become major identifiers, often surpassing the influence of family and other references. The quest for individual identity and empowerment includes identification with a group identity and the members experience an increase of personal power from the power of the peer group. If potentially offensive sexual acts are "jokes between friends", feeling harassed means putting the cohesion of your friendship structures in jeopardy. Thus, the reporting is very difficult and adults are needed to introduce, as well as to police, a broader definition of sexual harassment that includes more than just the worst cases. This cannot be done by students themselves, because that would mean to exclude oneself socially from the both the group and from sexuality – interpreted as enactment of power and adulthood – in general. Most of the respondents felt that to prevent sexual harassment in schools the schools should take more responsibility, and, the perpetrators should be treated harsher (Menckel & Witkowska, 2002).

Sexual harassment is an enactment of power through sexuality, and is used to build hierarchical differences between boys and between masculinities, in which aggressive heterosexual masculinity is superior. Positioning oneself against or even outside of this practice carries a danger of being labeled non-sexual and non-masculine. Those extremely complex contexts of sexual harassment in schools have to be recognized in all prevention and education efforts. Teachers and students need to be educated and empowered in critical evaluation and challenging the harmful practices and structures.

Good fit of the nested models supports the hypothesis that various behaviors in school create a sexualized environment and increase the probability of peer sexual harassment – the dynamic also found in the workplace (Gruber, 1992). In the present study, the items most representative for the general harassment factor were personal sexual comments, pressuring for sex, sexual contact, brushing up or rubbing against, and attractiveness rating. These behaviors are not always offensive or harassing by nature; rather, they belong to a continuum of sexual attention. Nevertheless, they seem to be predictors of peer sexual harassment in school. The embedded character of sexual harassment means that educators responsible for students, who are minors, need to make several important decisions, such as, to what degree and in which ways schools are able to accommodate or inhibit expressions of sexual attention amongst students while maintaining an educational approach. It is important to highlight the instances in which certain behaviors become inappropriate and harassing. The strategies employed to deal with sexual expression and sexual harassment, which include "turning a blind eye" or taking extreme measures, may have an impact on students' dignity that will extend beyond the school walls.

Sexual harassment and bullying

Students show strong resistance to labeling oneself as a victim of harassment, and a general avoidance of the "sexual harassment" label. Crosby (1984) found that women are more likely to acknowledge discrimination in general than their own, and Lee (2001, p. 30) has proposed that "a recognition of a range of terms for

unwanted male sexual conduct, rather than just one term, would enable more women to name and challenge unwelcome experiences". Stein (1999) and Land (2003) believe that it would be beneficial to re-interpret sexual harassment in schools as bullying. Sexual harassment in schools has been perceived in the Scandinavia as an aspect of bullying and not researched as a separate, complex phenomenon. A useful implication from seeing sexual harassment as related to bullying is that bullying does not require establishing of the uninvited/unwelcome factor. Act of bullying is not a discussion or debate, or a misunderstanding. Bullying is not a conflict, it is an act of aggression (Olweus, 1994). Systems approach in prevention, based on general policies may be more workable, in terms of regulation and prevention, than a host of specific policies and strategies (Rowe, 1996). However, it is imperative that any policy defines harassment as precisely as possible and gives examples of actual behaviors and situations, and not simply treats all problems as "bullying", so as not to contribute to the discourse of depoliticizing sexual and racial violence. Possible negative consequences may include: teachers and administrators will fail to use the hard won school harassment policy as the avenue for redress; they will be more likely to excuse "bullying" or just utilize normal discipline practices; "bullying" fails to address the aspect of victims unequal educational opportunity resulting from sexual harassment; and serves to de-gender the behavior thereby not acknowledging some of the underlying causes, which may result then in inadequate prevention and interventions strategies (Strauss, 2003).

Conclusions

Sexual harassment is an organizational problem, in that its manifestations and perceptions are socially and culturally based. The construct is deeply embedded in dimensions of gender, sexuality, and power. Students are reluctant to label incidents as sexual harassment, despite the fact that actual behaviors are perceived as environmental problems. Potentially offensive behaviors become normalized in the school environment, and too difficult to comprehend and address in a situation where little support provided by schools. Results of quantitative surveys require an interpretation in the context of issues of gender, sexuality and power, and, inorporating structural aspects – such as perpetrator/recipient gender configuration and severity – into questionnaire design would improve the interpretability of results. Different measures are needed for boys and for girls. Power of sexuality remains asymmetrical in the public domain – being seen as sexual has different consequences for women and men. It is important to keep in mind informal structures in schools, including peer groups, and how they influence the views and behaviors, and support certain forms of gender (re)production. Generally, greater efforts are needed to analyze and prevent sexual harassment in schools. Schools need to employ more sophisticated measurements and education and prevention strategies, incorporating an understanding of the complex nature of the phenomenon and its perception.

Summary

Witkowska E (2005) *Sexual harassment in schools: Prevalence, structure and perceptions*. Arbete och Hälsa 2005:10.

The overall aim of this project was to empirically explore and critically analyze the social phenomenon of sexual harassment in schools, its prevalence, structure and perceptions.

Data were collected from a random sample of high-school students, born in 1983, from all regions of Sweden, in a self-report mail survey administered in the spring of 2001. Five hundred and forty girls and 440 boys participated. The questionnaire addressed personal experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment, and also relevant aspects of the school environment. Sexual harassment was defined as inappropriate and unacceptable conduct of a sexual nature, or based on gender, that interferes with a student's right to a supportive, respectful and safe learning environment in school. This included different types of conduct, with verbal and non-verbal manifestations. The behaviors can be deemed unacceptable by the recipient, or by the school.

The results show that Swedish high-school students are exposed in their schools to a variety of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors (verbal, non-verbal, assaultive, and teacher-to-student). Students are reluctant to label incidents as "sexual harassment", despite the fact that actual behaviors are perceived as environmental problems. The revealed pattern of gender differences was not unexpected. Girls generally reported greater exposure to all of the behaviors – with the exceptions of homophobic name calling, showing pornography, and rougher physical behaviors – and were much more likely to see verbal behaviors as problems. Previous typologies, constructed for workplace sexual harassment, did not fit the student data well. A nested structure, with one general factor and two specific factors (resembling *hostile environment* and *sexual attention* categories) appears to offer the best fit-to-data for female students. For male respondents, however, the structure was less clear, and the fit worse, but the presence of a general sexual harassment factor was supported.

Sexual harassment is an organizational problem, in that its manifestations and perceptions are socially and culturally based. Offensive behaviors become normalized in the school environment, and too difficult to comprehend and address in a situation where little support is provided by schools themselves. The results of quantitative surveys require interpretation in the contexts of issues of gender, sexuality, and power; incorporating structural aspects – such as perperator/recipient gender configuration, and severity – into questionnaire design would improve the interpretability of results. Different measures are needed for boys and for girls. The power of sexuality remains asymmetrical in the public domain; being seen as sexual has different consequences for women and men. It is important to keep in mind informal structures in school, including peer groups, and how they influence views and behaviors and support certain forms of gender

(re)production. Generally, greater efforts are needed to analyze and effectively counteract sexual harassment in schools. Schools need to employ more sophisticated measurements and adopt education and prevention strategies that incorporate an understanding of the complex nature of the phenomenon and perceptions of it.

Keywords: sexual harassment; sexual bullying; gender; school violence; youth violence; learning environment; school health and safety promotion

Sammanfattning

Witkowska E (2005) *Sexuella trakasserier i skolan: Prevalens, struktur och uppfattningar.* Arbete och Hälsa 2005:10.

Det övergripande syftet med projektet var att göra en empirisk studie av och kritiskt analysera det sociala fenomenet sexuella trakasserier i skolan – dess prevalens, teoretiska struktur och hur det uppfattas.

Data samlades in från ett slumpmässigt urval av skolelever från hela Sverige födda 1983 i en enkäundersökning som skickades ut under våren 2001. Undersökningsgruppen bestod av 540 flickor och 440 pojkar. Frågeformuläret behandlade personliga erfarenheter av och uppfattningar om sexuella trakasserier samt andra aspekter av skolmiljön. Sexuella trakasserier definierades som olämpligt och oacceptabelt sexuellt eller könsrelaterat uppförande som inverkar på elevens rätt till en stödjande, respektfull och trygg inlärningsmiljö i skolan. Detta innefattar olika typer av beteenden, med verbala och icke-verbala yttringar. Beteendena kan bedömas som oacceptabla av mottagaren, eller av skolan.

Resultaten visar att svenska skolelever är utsatta för en mängd olika olämpliga och oacceptabla beteenden av sexuell eller könsrelaterad karaktär. Eleverna var ovilliga att beteckna incidenterna som sexuella trakasserier, trots att beteendena i sig uppfattades som miljöproblem. Beteenden som uppfattades som problem avfärdades dock inte lika lätt som egna erfarenheter, i synnerhet när det gäller de vanligaste verbala beteendena. De könsskillnader som visade sig var inte oväntade. Flickor rapporterade större exponering för alla beteenden, med undantag för homofobiskt språkbruk, visning av pornografi och grövre fysiska beteenden. Flickor var mer benägna att uppfatta verbalt beteende som problem än pojkar, men skillnaderna var inte lika uppenbara när det gällde andra typer av beteenden. Tidigare typologier, som konstruerats för sexuella trakasserier på arbetsplatsen, var inte lämpliga att använda för elevdata. En flerstegsstruktur med en allmän faktor och två specifika faktorer (som mest liknade kategorierna *fientlig miljö* och *sexuell uppmärksamhet*) tycktes passa bäst för flickorna. För pojkarna var strukturen mindre klar, och typologin passade ännu sämre, men att det allmänt förekom sexuella trakasserier.

Sexuella trakasserier är ett organisatoriskt problem, på så sätt att dess yttringar och uppfattningar är socialt och kulturellt grundade. Stötande beteenden normaliseras i skolmiljön, och är för svåra att förstå och hantera i en situation där skolorna erbjuder mycket litet stöd. Resultaten av kvantitativa studier måste tolkas i en köns-, sexualitets- och maktkontext. Strukturella aspekter, t ex könskonfigurationen mellan förövare/offer samt graden av allvarlighet, i utformningen av frågeformuläret skulle underlätta tolkningen av resultaten. Det krävs olika åtgärder för pojkar respektive flickor. Den sexuella maktfördelningen är ojämn i det offentliga rummet. Att uppfattas som sexuell har olika konsekvenser för kvinnor och män. Det är viktigt att komma ihåg de informella strukturerna, t ex kamratgrupper i skolan, och hur de påverkar åsikter och beteenden och underblåser vissa former av

könsskillnader. Rent generellt krävs större insatser för att analysera och effektivt motverka sexuella trakasserier i skolan. Skolan måste använda sig av mer sofistikerade mätmetoder och anamma utbildnings- och förebyggande strategier som bygger på en förståelse av fenomenets komplexa natur.

Nyckelord: sexuella trakasserier, sexuell mobbning, kön, genus, våld i skolan, våld bland unga, skolmiljö, hälsofrämjande och säkerhet i skolan.

References

AAUW. (2001). *Hostile hallways: bullying, teasing, and sexual harassment in school*. Washington: American Association of University Women.

Aeberhard-Hogdges, J. (1996). Sexual harassment in employment: Recent judicial and arbitral trends. *International Labour Review, 135*(5).

Ambjörnsson, F. (2004). *I en klass för sig. Genus, klass och sexualitet bland gymnasietjejer*. Stockholm: Ordfront.

Arvey, R. D., & Cavanaugh, M. A. (1995). Using surveys to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment: some methodological problems. *The Journal of Social Issues, 51*(1), 39-52.

Bagley, C., Bolitho, F., & Bertrand, L. (1997). Sexual assault in school, mental health and suicidal behaviors in adolescent women in Canada. *Adolescence, 32*(126), 361-366.

Baldwin, D. C., Jr., & Daugherty, S. R. (2001). Distinguishing sexual harassment from discrimination: A factor-analytic study of residents' reports. *Academic Medicine, 76*(10).

Berdahl, J. L., Magley, V. J., & Waldo, C. R. (1996). The sexual harassment of men? Exploring the concept with theory and data. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 20*(4), 527-547.

Bergman, B. (1997). *Women Among Men: Gender-Related Stress and Health Hazards Affecting Women Working in a Male-Dominated Industry*. Doctoral Dissertation, Goteborg University, Goteborg.

Berman, H., McKenna, K., Arnold, C. T., Taylor, G., & MacQuarrie, B. (2000). Sexual harassment: Everyday violence in the lives of girls and women. *Advances in Nursing Science, 22*(4), 32-46.

Bernelo, M., & Peterson, L. (2001). *Sexuella trakasserier - finns de på Chalmers?* Göteborg: Chalmers.

Bongers, I. M. B., & van Oers, J. A. M. (1998). Mode effects on self-reported alcohol use and problem drinking: Mail questionnaires and personal interviewing compared. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 59*(3), 280-285.

Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen & J. S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136-162). Newbury Park: Sage Publications Inc.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routlege.

Chodorow, N. (1999). *The power of feelings*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Corbett, K., Gentry, C. S., & Pearson, W., Jr. (1993). Sexual Harassment in High School. *Youth and Society, 25*(1), Sept, 93-103.

Crosby, F. (1984). The denial of personal discrimination. *American Behavioral Scientist, 27*(3), 371-386.

Dahinten, S. V. (1999). Peer sexual harassment: a barrier to the health of adolescent females? *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research, 31*(2), 41-52.

Dahinten, S. V. (2001). *Peer sexual harassment: A social determinant of adolescent health?* Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Dahinten, S. V. (2003). Peer sexual harassment in adolescence: The function of gender. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research, 35*(2), 56-73.

Dillman, D. A. (1983). Mail and other self-administered questionnaires. In P. H. Rossi, J. D. Wright & A. B. Anderson (Eds.), *Handbook of survey research*. New York and London: Academic Press, Inc.

Duffy, J., Wareham, S., & Walsh, M. (2004). Psychological consequences for high school students of having been sexually harassed. *Sex Roles, 50*(11/12), 811-821.

Duncan, N. (1999). *Sexual bullying*. London: Routledge.

Edgarth, K. (2001). *Adolescent sexuality and sexual abuse: A Swedish perspective*. Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm.

Einarsen, S., & Raknes, B. I. (1997). Harassment in the workplace and the victimization of men. *Violence Vict, 12*(3), 247-263.

Eliasson, M. A., Isaksson, K., & Laflamme, L. (in press). Verbal abuse, gender and well-being. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and health*.

European Comission. (1998). *Sexual harassment in the workplace in the European Union*: European Comission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs.

Fineran, S. (2002). Adolescents at work. *Violence Against Women, 8*(8), 953-967.

Fineran, S., & Bennett, L. (1998). Teenage peer sexual harassment: implications for social work practice in education. *Social Work, 43*(1), 55-64.

Fineran, S., & Bennett, L. (1999). Gender and power issues of peer sexual harassment among teenagers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14*(6), 626-641.

Fitzgerald, L. F. (1993). Sexual harassment. Violence against women in the workplace. *American Psychologist, 48*(10), 1070-1076.

Fitzgerald, L. F., Gelfand, M. J., & Drasgow, F. (1995). Measuring sexual harassment: theoretical and psychometric advances. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 17*(4), 425-445.

Fitzgerald, L. F., & Hesson-McInnis, M. (1989). The dimensions of sexual harassment: a structural analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 35*, 309-326.

Fitzgerald, L. F., Swan, S., & Magley, V. J. (1997). But was it really sexual harassment? In W. O'Donohue (Ed.), *Sexual Harassment: Theory, research, and treatment* (pp. 5-29). Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Forsberg, M. (2000). *Adolescent sexuality in Sweden*. Stockholm: Swedish National Institute of Public Health.

Foucault, M. (1992). *The history of sexuality*. London: Penguin Books.

Frazier, P. A., Cochran, C. C., & Olson, A. M. (1995). Social science research on lay definitions of sexual harassment. *The Journal of Social Issues, 51*(1), spring, 21-37.

Gillander Gådin, K. (2002). *Does the psychosocial school environment matter for health? A study of pupils in Swedish compulsory school from a gender perspective*. Doctoral dissertation, Umeå University, Umeå.

Gillander Gådin, K., & Hammarstrom, A. (2000). "We won't let them keep us quiet...." Gendered strategies in the negotiation of power-implications for pupils' health and school health promotion. *Health Promotion International, 15*(4), 303-311.

Gillander Gådin, K., & Hammarström, A. (in press). Sexual harassment at school - a possible contributor to the higher degree of girls reporting psychological symptoms compared with boys in grade nine. *European Journal of Public Health*.

Giuffre, P. A., & Williams, C. L. (1994). Boundary lines: labeling sexual harassment in restaurants. *Gender & Society, 8*(3), Sept, 378-401.

Gordon, M. T., & Riger, S. (1989). *The female fear: the social cost of rape*. New York: Free Press.

Grover, G. L., & Nangle, D. W. (2003). Adolescent perceptions of problematic heterosexual situations: A focus group study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32*(2), 129-139.

Gruber, J. (1990). Methodological problems and policy implications in sexual harassment research. *Population Research and Policy Review, 9*, 235-254.

Gruber, J. E. (1992). A typology of personal and environmental sexual harassment: research and policy implications for the 1990s. *Sex Roles, 26*(11-12), 447-464.

Gruber, J. E. (1997). An epidemiology of sexual harassment: Evidence from North America and Europe. In W. O'Donohue (Ed.), *Sexual Harassment: Theory, research, and treatment*. (pp. 84-99). Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Gruber, J. E., Smith, M., & Kauppinen-Toropainen, K. (1995). Sociocultural and organizational predictors of six types of sexual harassment: results from international surveys. *American Sociological Association*.

Hägg, K. (2003). Aspects of sexual harassment from a Swedish perspective. In V. Sunnari, J. Kangasvuo & M. Heikkinen (Eds.), *Gendered and sexualised violence in educational environments* (pp. 138-149). Oulu: Oulu University Press.

Hand, J. Z., & Sanchez, L. (2000). Badgering or bantering? Gender differences in experience of, and reactions to, sexual harassment among U.S. high school students. *Gender & Society, 14*(6), 718-746.

Harne, L. (2000). Sexual violence and the school curriculum. In J. Radford, M. Friedberg & L. Harne (Eds.), *Women, violence, and strategies for action: feminist research, policy and practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Houston, S., & Hwang, N. (1996). Correlates of the objective and subjective experiences of sexual harassment in high school. *Sex Roles, 34*(3/4), 189-205.

Hu, L.-T., & Bentler, P. M. (1995). Evaluating model fit. In R. H. Hoyle (Ed.), *Structural equation modeling: Concepts, issues and applications* (pp. 76-99). London: Sage.

Juvonen, J., Nishina, A., & Graham, S. (2000). Peer harassment, psychological adjustment, and school functioning in early adolescence. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*(2), 349-359.

Kelly, L. (1988). *Surviving sexual violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kline, R. B. (1998). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Kullenberg, U., & Ehrenlans, B. (1996). *Stopp for Sexuella Trakasserier* (Report). Stockholm: Elevvårdsenheten.

Lahelma, E. (2002). Gendered conflicts in secondary school: fun or enactment of power. *Gender and Education, 14*(3), 295-306.

Lahelma, E., Palmu, T., & Gordon, T. (2000). Intersecting power relations in teachers' experiences of being sexualized and harassed by students. *Sexualities, 3*(4), 463-448.

Land, D. (2003). Teasing apart secondary students' conceptualizations of peer teasing, bullying, and sexual harassment. *School Psychology International, 24*(2), 147-165.

Larkin, J. (1994). Walking through walls: the sexual harassment of high school Girls. *Gender and Education, 6*(3), 263-280.

Lee, D. (2001). "He didn't sexually harass me, as in harassed for sex.... He was just horrible": Women's definitions of unwanted male sexual conduct at work. *Women's Studies International Forum, 24*(1), 25-38.

Lee, V. E., Croninger, R. G., Linn, E., & Chen, X. (1996). The culture of sexual harassment in secondary schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 33*(2), 383-417.

Loredo, C., Reid, A., & Deaux, K. (1995). Judgments and definitions of sexual harassment by high school students. *Sex Roles, 32*(1-2), Jan, 29-45.

Magley, V. J., Hulin, C. L., Fitzgerald, L. F., & DeNardo, M. (1999). Outcomes of self-labeling sexual harassment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 84*(3), 390-402.

Magnusson, E. (1997). Talking about gender equality: Swedish women's discourses on the home front. *NORA*(2), 76-94.

McMaster, L. E., Connolly, J., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. M. (2002). Peer to peer sexual harassment in early adolescence: A developmental perspective. *Development and Psychopatology, 14*, 91-105.

Menckel, E., & Witkowska, E. (2002). *Allvar eller pa skamt? En nationell undersokning av sprakbruk och sexuella beteenden bland gymnasieelever (Is it a joke or do you mean it? National survey of sex related language and behviours in Swedish high-schools)*. Stockholm: National Institute for Working Life.

Murnen, S. K., & Smolak, L. (2000). The experience of sexual harassment among grade school students: Early socialization of female subordination? *Sex Roles, 43*(1/2).

Nolin, M. J., & Chandler, K. (1996). *Use of cognitive laboratories and recorded interviews in the National Household Education Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Öhrn, E. (1998). Gender and power in school: On girls' open resistance. *Social Psychology of Education, 1*, 341-357.

Olweus, D. (1994). Bullying at school. Basic facts and an effective intervention programme. *Promotion & Education, 1*(4), 27-31, 48.

Paludi, M. A. (1997). Sexual harassment in schools. In W. O'Donohue (Ed.), *Sexual Harassment: Theory, research, and treatment.* (pp. 225-250). Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Quinn, B. (2002). Sexual harassment and masculinity. The power and meaning of 'girl watching'. *Gender and Society, 16*(3), 386-402.

Ring, L. (1994). Sexual harassment and the production of gender. *Differences, 6*(1), spring, 129-166.

Robinson, K. H. (2005). Reinforcing hegemonic masculinities through sexual harassment: issues of identity, power and popularity in secondary schools. *Gender and Education, 17*(1), 19-37.

Roscoe, B., Strouse, J. S., & Goodwin, M. P. (1994). Sexual harassment: early adolescents' self-reports of experiences and acceptance. *Adolescence, 29*(115), 515-523.

Rospenda, K., Richman, J., & Nawyn, S. (1998). Doing power. the confluence of gender, race, and class in contrapower sexual harassment. *Gender & Society, 12*(1), 40-60.

Rowe, M. P. (1996). Dealing with harassment: A systems approach. In M. S. Stockdale (Ed.), *Sexual harassment in the workplace: Perspectives, frontiers, and response strategies*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Salih, S., & Butler, J. (Eds.). (2004). *The Judith Butler reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Samuels, H. (2003). Sexual harassment in the workplace: A feminist analysis of recent developments in the UK. *Women's Studies International Forum, 26*(5), 467-482.

Schneider, K. T. (1997). *Bystander stress: The effect of organizational tolerance of sexual harassment on victims' co-workers.* Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, ILL.

Shakeshaft, C., Barber, E., Hergenrother, M. A., Johnson, Y. M., Mandel, L. S., & Sawyer, J. (1995). Peer harassment in schools. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 1*(1), 30-44.

Shumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (1996). *A beginner's guide to structural equation modeling*. Mahawah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Smith, P. K. (2003). *Violence In Schools: The Response In Europe*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Stein, N. (1995). Sexual harassment in school: the public performance of gendered violence. *Harvard Educational Review, 65*(2), 145-162.

Stein, N. (1999). *Classrooms and Courtrooms: Facing sexual harassment in K-12 schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Stockdale, M. S., & Hope, K. G. (1997). Confirmatory factor analysis of u.s. merit systems protection board's survey of sexual harassment: the fit of a three-factor model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 51*, 338-367.

Stockdale, M. S., & Vaux, A. (1993). What sexual harassment experiences lead respondents to acknowledge being sexually harassed? A secondary analysis of a university survey. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 43*, 221-234.

Strauss, S. (2003). Sexual harassment in K-12. In M. Palaudi & C. A. Paludi (Eds.), *Academic and workplace sexual harassment: a handbook of cultural, social science, and legal perspectives*. Westport: Praeger.

Tangri, S. S., & Hayes, S. M. (1997). Theories of sexual harassment. In W. O'Donohue (Ed.), *Sexual Harassment: Theory, research, and treatment* (pp. 112-128). Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Terrance, C., Logan, A., & Peters, D. (2004). Perception of peer sexual harassment among high school students. *Sex Roles, 51*(7/8, October), 479-490.

Thomas, A. M., & Kitzinger, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Sexual Harassment: contemporary feminist perspectives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: girls and boys in school*. Buckingham, UK: Open University press.

Timmerman, G. (1999). Incidence and methodology in sexual harassment research in in northwest Europe. *Women's Studies International Forum, 22*(6), 673-681.

Timmerman, G. (2002). A comparison between unwanted sexual behavior by teachers and by peers in secondary schools. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 31*(5), 397-404.

Tolman, D. L. (2003). Daring to desire. Culture and the bodies of adolescent girls. In R. Weitz (Ed.), *The politics of women's bodies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Tyden, T. (1996). *It will not happen to me*. Uppsala University, Uppsala.

Vaux, A. (1993). Paradigmatic assumptions in sexual harassment research: Being guided without being mislead. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 42*(1), 116-135.

Waldo, C. R., Berdahl, J. L., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1998). Are men sexually harassed? If so, by whom? *Law & Human Behavior, 22*(1), 59-79.

Walkerdine, V. (1990). *School girl fiction*. London: Verso.

Wasti, S. A., & Cortina, L. M. (2002). Coping in context: sociocultural determinants of responses to sexual harassment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*(2), 394-405.

Welsh, S., & Nierobisz, A. (1997). How prevalent is sexual harassment: a research note on measuring sexual harassment in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie, 22*(4), fall, 505-522.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1991). Doing gender. In J. Lorber & S. A. Farell (Eds.), *The social construction of gender*. Newbury park: SAGE.

White, A. L. (2000). *Understanding peer sexual harassment among older male adolescents*. University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Witkowska, E., & Gillander Gådin, K. (2005). Have you been sexually harassed in school? What female high school students regard as harassment. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health, 17*(4).

Witkowska, E., & Kjellberg, A. (in press). Dimensions of peer sexual harassment in Swedish high schools: What factor structures show the best fit to girls' and boys' self-reports? *Sex Roles*.

Woodzicka, J. A., & LaFrance, M. (2001). Real versus imagined gender harassment. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*(1), 15-30.

APPENDIX

Questions measuring exposure to behaviors related to sexual harassment

Sektion B. Detta är frågor om dina erfarenheter på din skola, under skoltid eller i samband med skolaktiviteter under pågående skolår. Var snäll och svara så ärligt du kan på frågorna. Ta även med de gånger när du eller andra tyckte att det bara var på skämt. Kryssa för "aldrig" om du inte har upplevt något av följande beteenden. **Hur ofta har det hänt dig under det pågående skolåret att en eller flera elever på skolan har…**

50(a). Kallat dig för hora, slyna, fitta eller liknande ord?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

51(a). Kallat dig lesbisk, bög, flata eller liknande ord?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

52(a). Kommenterat ditt utseende, din kropp eller ditt privatliv på ett sexuellt vis?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

53(a). Spridit sexuella rykten om dig?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

54(a). Skrivit nedsättande saker om dig tex. på toaletter eller i omklädningsrum.

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

55(a). Sagt nedsättande skämt och saker om ditt kön eller sexualitet, eller om människor som är av samma kön eller sexualitet som du, tex. "alla tjejer är horor" eller "jag hatar bögar"?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

(c). Sagt nedsättande skämt och saker om ditt kön eller sexualitet, eller om människor som är av samma kön eller sexualitet som du, tex "alla killar är så omogna"?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(d).Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

56(a). Skrutit om sina sexuella erfarenheter, pratat om sexuella fantasier och drömmar eller om sitt sexliv flera gånger inför dig, eller när du är i närheten?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

57(a). Offentligt kommenterat hur attraktiv eller oattraktiv du är?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

58(a).Upprepade gånger följt efter dig, lämnat meddelanden eller frågat andra (tex dina kompisar) om dig och inte accepterat om du inte vill träffas?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan , under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

59(a). Kommit med antydningar, förslag eller krav på sexuella tjänster eller ett sexuellt förhållande?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

60(a). Visat eller lämnat stötande bilder, foton, teckningar eller meddelanden till dig?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

61(a). Tittat på dig på ett vis som känns påträngande och sexuellt?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

62(a). Gett dig kommentarer, skämtat eller gestikulerat på ett vis som är sexuellt?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

63(a). Gnidit, strukit eller tryckt sig mot dig på ett sexuellt vis (även "av misstag")?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

64(a). Dragit i/av dina kläder på ett sexuellt vis, tex dragit i bh-banden, dragit upp kjolen eller dragit i kalsongerna?

1	2	3	4	5
❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dagligen	Varje vecka	Varje månad	Nån gång	Aldrig

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja
❒2 Nej

Sektion C. Detta avsnitt rör beteenden som är uttalat sexuella, och omfattar fysisk kontakt. Det kan vara svårt att fundera på dessa situationer, vare sig du har varit med om det eller inte. Men dessa frågor är viktiga, så försök svara på dem så ärligt som du kan. **Har det hänt under det pågående skolåret att en eller flera elever i skolan …**

65(a). Tafsat och rört vid dina intima kroppsdelar på ett sexuellt vis?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

66(a). Gripit tag i eller nypt och klämt på dig på ett sexuellt sätt?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

67(a). Trängt in dig i ett hörn eller hållit fast dig och dragit i/av dina kläder?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

68(a). Tvingat dig att ha sex?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?

❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

Sektion D. Dessa frågor rör beteenden som du kan ha upplevt från lärare eller någon annan i skolpersonalen. Var snäll och berätta så ärligt du kan om något av följande har hänt i skolan eller i samband med skolaktiviteter under pågående skolår. Kom ihåg att dina lärare eller klasskompisar inte kommer att få läsa det du skrivit, och det kan heller inte at påverka dina betyg. **Har det hänt under det pågående skolåret att en lärare eller någon annan bland skolpersonalen…**

69(a). Kommit med förslag, önskningar eller krav på sexuella tjänster eller ett sexuellt förhållande?
❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

70(a). Rört vid dig på ett sätt som du tyckte var obehagligt?
❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

71(a). Kommit med sexuellt nedsättande kommentarer och skämt om din sexualitet eller om människor av samma kön eller sexualitet som du?
❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej

(b). Har det hänt dig någon gång tidigare i skolan, under hela din skoltid?
❒1 Ja ❒2 Nej